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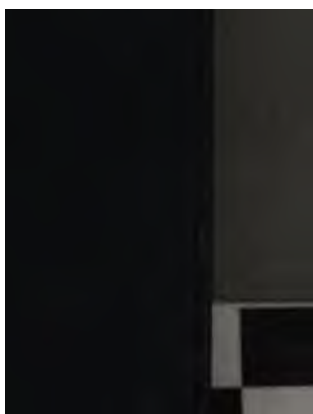
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ILL-WON PEERAGES

OR

An Unhallowed Union.

“ Let Ira’s page be told in song,
Or woven in theme of bardic story ;
Still, in her foes we trace the wrong,
Whose hand with rude oppression long
Essayed to quench her quenchless glory.”

ILL-WON PEERAGES

OR

AN UNHALLOWED UNION

BY

M. L. O'BYRNE

AUTHOR OF "LEIXLIP CASTLE," "THE PALE AND THE SEPTS,"
ETC.

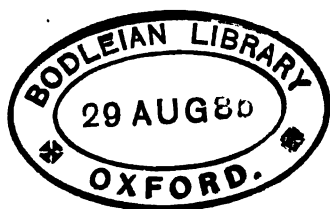
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INTRODUCTION.

IN the memorable year, 1782, the illustrious Grattan, ruling the heart of Ireland and governing the action of eighty thousand Volunteers, had extorted from the King and Parliament of Great Britain the unwilling admission, conceded to apprehension, that Ireland was a crowned imperial nation, entitled to her own distinct Parliament, laws, and self-government, owing allegiance solely to the monarch of England, and irresponsible to any other authority than his. Under the system of home rule so inaugurated, the country, like a giant invested with the seven-leagued boots of the fairy-tale, made strides so marvellous to prosperity and aggrandisement, that England, fired with jealous alarm to behold the slave whom she had so long oppressed, and by whose drudgery she had become enriched, now assuming the attitude of a rival queen, hastened to interpose a timely check to such haughty pretension, and reduce the aspirant to the abject condition to which she had heretofore, after protracted conflict, humbled her. To achieve such *desideratum*, her first effort, she perceived, should be directed to abolish the foundation upon which was based the structure of the national independence, the rampart of its strength, the

shield of its defence, the mainspring of its progress, its native Parliament. In the members of the senate, who represented chiefly but a small faction—the Orange ascendency, from which they sprung, and who, aliens as they were in race and creed, had little sympathy with the people, and no interest in the country beyond that of enjoying the luxurious incomes and emoluments which they derived from it, and who were, many of them, therefore, quite willing to negotiate terms for the sale of privileges patriots would have shed their blood to defend—the British Government found no obstacle to their design. A judicious expenditure of bribe-money (levied in impost upon the land), a few garish titles to dazzle the vain, places and pensions to the needy or the avaricious, bait to suit every fancy lavishly flung out, could not fail, statesmen argued, to purchase hirelings enough for their business in hand. But an impediment, a stumbling-block, was yet in the way, less facile to be got over—the nation was there, though composed mainly of unenfranchised serfs, whom religion's penal laws had disqualified from voice in congress. Yet the nation claimed its Parliament and the advantages which a native government, albeit framed by a corrupt and prejudiced aristocracy, could alone ensure. The united nation, firm and outspoken on this point, would never consent, at any price, to part with its charter of home legislation, the bulwark of its life, safety, and honour. England had frequently experienced the strength of the nation's arm and the tenacity of her grasp in holding her own: inadequate of herself to cope with her antagonist, from whom she was resolved to wrench the precious heritage in her possession, auxiliary aid must be resorted to; forced pretext to sanction the iniquitous *scheme*, Ireland must be goaded into insurrection, that

she may be crushed, by means and by agents to contemplate which makes the blood run cold. So, accordingly, Ireland was excited to frenzy by due application of the goad, and one hundred and sixty thousand men—regular troops, reinforced by German and Scotch mercenaries—were poured in to stifle the cry of the struggling land in blood,

The two counties, Wexford and Wicklow, where the concentrated fire of Milesian, Danish, Anglo-Norman, and Celtic spirit burned with hereditary ardour, unsupported for many a long day by their compatriots, bore the brunt of the overwhelming shock of the conflict, and in many a bold charge drove the mail-clad and war-panoplied regiments of Britain ingloriously before the point of the pike, almost their only weapon and sole armour. As in the case of Napoleon at Waterloo, defeat terminated their high career, but in either case defeat to the vanquished confirmed their glory, instead of abstracting from it. Speaking of these indomitable counties, in the Rev. P. Kavanagh's interesting work, "The Insurrection of '98," page 249, we read, in allusion to the stand made by the insurgents at Wexford: He says: "Had the rest of their countrymen awakened, even at the eleventh hour, Ireland had not been now an uncrowned nation. . . . They were left to continue the desperate struggle unaided; the heavy yoke of the Penal Laws had so effectually subdued the once fiery spirit of the Celtic population of Ireland that they could remain spectators of such a strife, could behold their countrymen engaged in a death-grapple with the might of their ancient foe, could see them trodden down by the swarming myriads of England's mercenaries without raising an arm to aid them! Oppression, indeed, had well-nigh crushed all manhood out of their souls; they had been so long helots that they seemed to have forgotten

they were descended from freemen. The deep abasement of the national spirit is, alas! too clearly reflected in the loyal addresses and humble supplications addressed at this period to the British Sovereign, or to his shadowy representative in the Irish metropolis. Reading over those effusions now-a-days, one is filled with wonder to see men fallen to such depth of abasement—such loyalty and gratitude addressed to the representative of a power that had ground them to the dust, &c. &c. . . .

“If men of birth and education had fallen so low, can we wonder that those of the lower rank were no better?—for worse they could hardly be.” To this caustic animadversion we beg respectfully to offer the following observations: “The heavy yoke of the penal law had so effectually subdued the once fiery and high-spirited Celtic population of Ireland, that they could remain spectators of such a strife.” Alas! the penal laws combined with wave after wave of invasion flowing, for generations, from a putrid and pestilential ocean over the fair isle of Eire, had well nigh obliterated the footprints of the Celt from the soil; and the apathy of the rest of the country proved not so much the abjection as the annihilation of the aboriginal element.

“The tree shall be known by its fruit.” Was it from Dublin, Kildare, and Meath, populated with the mean descendants of Cromwellian roundheads, regicides, murderers, unprincipled perjurers, thieves, London absconded clerks, scavengers and horseboys, ill-conditioned, voracious adventurers, bible mongers, with God on their lips and Satan in their bosoms, that sympathy with a noble cause could be expected? Was it from the cautious, mercenary posterity of canny Scotch planters in the North that aid could have been hoped for? Was it from a class of aristocracy whose patents of nobility were not the guerdon of

fair chivalry or won by high deeds of honour and renown, but the vile badge of state livery, the dearly earned wages of the minion, lacquey, parasite, and factotum, hired to any ignoble service required by their patrons, the *parvenues* whose titles were founded upon confiscations, blood, and stockjobbing, whose proudest boast was their ephemeral notoriety, too often begotten of infamy, and their acme of bliss to bask and revel in the sunshine of castle patronage and great men's smiles—that aught of noble hereditary instincts, generous impulses, the heirlooms of freeborn minds, could be looked for? The page of history records but few, indeed, whose gallant hearts, impregnate with the old Celtic flame or some infusion of it, throbbed high for freedom even within the hotbed of the colonists; but the prolific redundancy of the rank, baleful weeds sown broadcast where fragrant flowers, long since torn up by the root, had bloomed, full soon choked and exterminated the puny effort of such seedling blossoms to rear their head upon the site of the former garden. We read in Holy Writ of olden time that Job was delivered to the power of the Evil One to try his constancy by affliction, to slay his children, to scatter his wealth, and reduce him to the condition of a leper on a dunghill, the pity and scorn of the world, the power alone being withheld to take his life. May we not discern some parallel in the example of a nation persecuted, reviled, and reduced to utter misery, the reproach and outcast, as it were, of the world? But so surely as Job emerged more glorious from his degradation and ruin, so shall Erin come forth from the furnace seven times heated, triumphant over the idol to which she would not bend her royal head, still grasping the sceptre she would not relinquish, and with an aureole of victory encircling her majestic brow, shine out again through rifted

clouds, even as once she was the morning star of the nations. We read, too, of the martyrs of the Colosseum; great was their divine constancy, admirable their invincible courage; their glorious names, transmitted to posterity, are worthily commemorated in every age, in every clime; but who has heard or seen record of the innumerable martyrs who, unchronicled, nameless, and unknown, lie forgotten in obscure graves in Erin? Hoary men, aged women, generous youth, blooming maiden, innocent childhood, venerable pastor, priest and people, crushed down beneath the iron heel of bigotry, cut off by the merciless sword of persecution, lie huddled in undistinguished dust, mouldering in oblivion, the ivy drooping above their prostrate heads, the sole garland of the victors; the winds sighing over their bones, the only mourners; the birds of the air piping their requiem from spray to spray, and the wild flowers that bloom in the summer from their clay seem alone to hold commune with, and tell of the spirits departed. The days of the amphitheatre had gone by, and wild beasts were exploded as no longer in fashion; but in the hands of men—Christian men of the eighteenth century, more ferocious than they—the pitchcap, the scourge, the picket, the brand, the gibbet, famine's slow consuming torture, death in a thousand forms more cruel than wolf or tiger could inflict; the bitter draught was administered to the Irish Catholic who would not ignore his country, belie his race, and apostatise to his creed; but when time shall have run its course, and at the archangel's summons the nations of the earth shall stand for judgment before Him to whom nothing is hidden, names shall be found emblazoned on the scroll side by side with those of the primitive martyrs, whom a chasm of nearly two thousand years now intervenes to sunder, and in letters of fire upon

the recording angel's book shall be inscribed the persecution which for centuries Ireland had endured at the hands of enlightened Christian but apostate England!

Genius of Erin, droop thy pallid brow, mantle thy wan visage in veil of mourning, and with tremulous fingers sound the quivering harpstrings to the "Dead March" in "Saul" while the curtain rises on the tragio stage of '98.



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ILL-WON PEERAGES

OR

AN UNHALLOWED UNION.

CHAPTER I.

CABINTEERLY.

"Ay, let the land
Whose sons, through centuries of woe, have striven
And perished by her temples, sink awhile,
Borne down in conflict! But immortal seed,
Deep, by heroic suffering, hath been sown
On all her ancient hills, and generous hope
Knows that the soil in its good time shall yet
Bring forth a glorious harvest! Earth receives not
One red drop, from faithful hearts in vain."—

"SIEGE OF VALENTIA."

It was a severe night, in the winter of the year 1797; the trees that covered the park-like demesne of Cabinteely swayed and groaned to the blast that shrieked and wailed, as though laden with accents of human woe it hurried by to some appointed goal of pain; the antlered deer cowered in the shelter of glen and thicket from the falling snow-flakes, while a rivulet intersecting the undulating plain, swollen with floods from the neighbouring hills, rushed turbulently through its narrow channel to mingle its waters in the bed of the river at Glen Druid hard by. But within the stately mansion, the residence of Robert Byrne, the evening lamps had been lighted, cheery wood-fires blazed, burnishing with umbered radiance the amber damask curtains that draped the lofty windows of the spacious saloon, with its antique furniture, costly paintings, and the elaborate stucco work of the beautiful medallioned ceiling; cast fitful flashes through the open portal into the long corridor, whose arched roof lay half revealed in light and shadow;

and with richer, warmer effulgence the united blaze of fag-got and chandelier illumined the ample dining-hall, round whose hospitable board circled a company of distinguished guests, who all more or less played a public part in the scenes of the time, some of whom have inscribed their names on the page of history, and stand prominently on the foreground in the frontispiece. The cloth had been removed, the wine and fruit set upon the table, the liveried attendants withdrawn ; breaking the momentary lull that followed after grace had been said, and diverging from the small talk and bagatelle conversation that had enlivened the dinner into theme whose more absorbing interest had engrossed almost every interest in all classes of the country, viz., that of the momentous political transactions of the period, one of the guests, a small man with stooped shoulders and prominent foreign-looking physiognomy, marked with character and replete with fire and energy, turned and addressed the host, a personage whose *tout ensemble* of figure and lineament by no means sustained the prestige of a race hitherto pre-eminent for every attribute of physical perfection. His was not the lofty stature, the majestic mien, the stately bearing that had characterised his chieftain ancestry ; nevertheless, courtly and courteous in manner, and with a beaming eye and smile that redeemed the aspect of a countenance heavy and dull, and features plain and commonplace, Robert Byrne looked up, and fixed a gaze of concentrated attention upon his guest as he spoke in accents concise and clear :

"I wish, Byrne, you'd let us get you into Parliament. Fact is, we want a reinforcement of staunch auxiliaries to back us up ; our opponents are playing a deep game—it needs no seer to warn us what they are contemplating, or no oracle to foretel the sequel, if they be not counter-checked. Castlereagh is a daring Machiavelian, and his satellites are legion. It will task our best efforts to hold our own against them."

"I should be well content, Grattan, to meet your wishes," returned Robert Byrne, with a smile of humour lurking in his dark eye, and round the corner of his lips. Nor may I gainsay the ability of the potent arm that

has wrested our imperial crown from England's grasp, and exalting our prostrate nation, proudly set it on her brow, to achieve another such Cyclopean victory. Nevertheless, I fear me, not Hercules himself could with his club level the barrier that you know excludes me from a place among you in the senate."

"Nonsense!" sharply returned Henry Grattan; "I know of nothing to exclude you, save want of will on your own part. You have a large landed interest in the country, where you are popular and well known. Everything favours you. Say but the word, and trust me to tide you over the waves triumphant. Faith, I had carried on my back a heavier load the day I took up the stubborn peers to set them down in their rightful position in the House. Not half so difficult to coerce a child to take physic as it was to prevail upon these enigmatical beings to accept their own privileges, and to sustain their own dignity. Nor could I have succeeded but for their wholesome terror of the rod, which they well knew I would have wielded had they persevered refractory. Ah! the disbanding of the Volunteers was a vast evil to the country," and Grattan sighed, as in melancholy retrospection his thoughts reverted to the past. "Yes, it was a bad job. But come, Byrne, what say you to my proposal?"

Slowly extracting a pinch of snuff from his gold snuff-box, which he then handed to Hussey Burgh, Robert Byrne deliberately made answer, calm but resolute: "I grieve, my friend, I have no choice but to say thee nay. Deprecating as I do the means by which my sire retained this small modicum of our once vast territorial inheritance,* I would not, seduced by adulation, vanity, or ambition, compromise one iota of my conscientious conviction, or swerve one inch from rectitude of principle in weak compliance to the dictum of those Draconic laws my forefathers had resisted with their blood. No; albeit a cypher, without political existence, denied the rights of citizen or patriot in my own land, and held of less account

* George Byrne, his father, had married the sister of the Marquis of Buckingham, the Viceroy, and conformed. That branch of the family are now extinct.

therein than the man who sweeps my chimney, I would not purchase a life, a voice in the senate, by servile concession to its imperious requirements, or shape my opinions, or conform my faith to its ordinance.—Never!”

A pause of deep silence succeeded this brief speech. With bent head and shaded brow, Grattan seemed immersed in thought. It was but for a moment. Proudly he lifted his eyes, that flashed with fire, and glancing round the circle, emphatically he exclaimed: “We must put an end to this state of things. An oligarchy must not continue the sole representatives of a nation. In the hands of a Protestant ascendancy must not be vested wholesale the exclusive privilege and enjoyment of the rights of nationality, else ours is not a free country. Freedom is the right of a people as much as of a class. Am I not advocating justice, Hussey Burgh?”

The gentleman appealed to smiled, shook his head, and replied: “Yes, yes, if you can succeed in imbuing our lawgivers with your magnanimous sentiment we may live to behold the fruition of your good purpose. But, thick-headed as they be, I much fear you would need again the Volunteers at your back to argue them into reason. Le Touche and Fitzgibbon, you know, are two of the most virulent opponents of the Catholic Relief Bill. Mr. Byrne, I shall thank you to pass over the decanter near you—claret, I believe?”

“O’Byrne, sir,” returned, with gracious suavity of manner, the individual addressed, a tall, handsome-looking man in the prime of life, and his melancholy smile for a moment relaxed the austere traits of a grave, haughty, and somewhat Spanish style of physiognomy, while a perceptible flush, it might be of shame or pride, gave a momentary warm hue to his dusky complexion, as he handed over the wine to Hussey Burgh, who, scarcely suppressing an answering smile, bowed low and fixed his eye with an expression of mingled curiosity and interest upon the stranger, to whom he had been only that evening introduced as a relative of his host.

But Robert Byrne, chancing to overhear, exclaimed, in accents peremptory and sharp: “Nonsense, Miles, I

say. Don't stand in your own light just now, my kinsman, by quibbling for punctilios that involve no principle."

"I have a right to bear my father's name, I suppose, waiving any consideration," answered the other, with a heightened colour, and gesture of concentrated sternness and dignity that quite overawed his assuming kinsman, who, in tone more deferential, responded :

"Ours is, unfortunately, a name obnoxious to the ears of statesmen, and of as evil repute to-day as was that of our ancestor Fiach Mac Hugh O'Byrne to the Pale in the days of Elizabeth. Hence, submitting to exigency, several members of our family, to avert the lightning from their heads, or struggling to hold their footing on the soil, have relinquished the affix. For instance, the Byrnes of Ballymanus, Castletown, and Kimmage; also Colonel John and Captain Gregory, though like you, Miles, and your brother Hugh, in France they retained it, found it expedient upon their return to merge the objectionable badge. You must follow their example, and descend to the level of the herd, if you hope to prosper and not render nugatory the interest I would use in your favour to promote your fortune, as it would be more gratifying to my pride to be surrounded by independent relatives than by needy parasites."

This was an unfortunate peroration to a well-meant address. Ill could the proud Miles brook the innuendo it conveyed to his sensitive mind. With a swelling bosom and darkling eye he glanced at his brother Hugh, who very much resembled him in appearance, save that his countenance was more bright, his features more flexible, his aspect and mien altogether more winning; yet now there was thunder on his brow, and the lurid flame in his eye, as, confronting his kinsman, in low, measured tone, animated with quiet scorn, he said :

"There speaks your mother's blood, the blood of the Nugent's, Robert; for, by heaven! 'tis not the voice of the freeborn, high and fiery spirit of our race. Constrained by the revolutionary storms raging in France, and levelled with fury against the monarch whose staunch adherents we had been, to fly from the country that had so long afforded

us an honourable asylum, and return as strangers to our fatherland, fear not but that the same good heart and hand that worked our way to fortune in the service of a foreign State will yet preserve our independence, and spare us the necessity of clinging to any prop."

Robert Byrne, sincerely pained for the inconsiderate words that, so misconstrued, had roused the too susceptible feelings of his relatives, was about to enter upon apologetic explanation, when his wife, in whose Anglo-Norman features might be distinctly traced her lineal descent from the ill-starred Earl of Essex, whose life-sized portrait graced the mantelpiece, interposed, and in accents sententious, clear, and ringing, exclaimed, while she divided a bunch of grapes with a scissors:

"Gracious! how irascible you are, Miles and Hugh. What's in a name, that you should be so touchy about it?" and she darted a glance, whose expression was somewhat irate, at Miles, who, seated opposite, with downcast brow, and eyes resting upon his plate, was playing with a fork, apparently intent upon some candied fruit, and did not notice her. But his brother did, and drawing up his stately form, and waving his head in obeisance at once deferential and majestic, he made answer:

"Much, madame; very much is expressed in a name. What the colour is to the regiment that carries it, what the flag is to the ship under which it sails, what the cognisance is to the knight who lists in the tournament, is the name you bear. It is your crest, your coat-of-arms. Ours in a foreign land has been our *passe-partout* to honour, fame, and fortune. In the court, the chamber of peers, the army, its claim was recognised and respected. Hence, if you please, we shall take leave to hold it intact as our sole, and by no means despicable inheritance, and bear it unsullied to the grave!"

"Permit me to suggest a codicil," smiled Hussey Burgh; "transmit it crowned with glory to your sons."

Miles looked up and shrugged his shoulders; Hugh laughed silently. Hussey Burgh continued:

"I quite endorse your sentiment, sir. 'Tell me your company' is a trite proverb; but 'Tell me your name' is

also a significant index to your deserts; and that of O'Byrne holds high place in the annals of a country famed for heroes and sages, the *Insula Sanctorum* of antiquity, and still the parent of offspring not inferior to their progenitors."

"I deny that," retorted an elderly personage of severe aspect, and in the tone of his voice there was a harsh echo that grated on the ear. "If such miscreants as Higgins, the Sham Squire, Gifford, Knox, Jacob, and Finley be specimens of the Island of Saints and Sages, why, all I can say is, the designation must bear some different construction among yourselves, and requires some definition not yet found in the dictionary."

"Pardon my interrupting you, Judge Day," exclaimed Miles O'Byrne, with vehemence. "You select your specimens at random. Unfortunately, those descendants whom you have named, with thousands besides of Cromwellian ruffians born in the land, call themselves, and will be denominated Irishmen. Unthinking strangers will not discriminate their claim, but they are as distinctive from the genuine race as nettles and thistles are from the lily and the violet of the garden into which they have obtruded. Generations hence will be seen the offspring of Heppenstals, Higgans, Gowans, Luttrells, Swans, and shoals of such——"

"Add Clonmel, Carhampton, and Castlereagh," whispered Hussey Burgh, *sotto voce*.

"Naturalised in the land," continued Miles; "yet with claim to the glorious title, as apart from that of O'Neils, O'Donnells, O'Sullivans, Mac Mahons, Mac Carthys, as ill-begotten hind from nobly-descended knight, as gutter-bred cut-throat from chivalrous crusader; as distinct in natural quality as the obscene hyena from the royal lion, as the carrion bird is from the eagle. Of old the English invaders made a line of demarcation between their own and the aboriginal race of the land, Irish by birth, and Irish by blood. To save the remnant of our race from being confounded in the obloquy cast upon the land by alien infamy, we must take leave to perpetuate the distinction."

"Nevertheless, men of the race bearing the olden patronymics have proved themselves quite as adept in scoundrelism as any of the new-come-in," observed Kendal Bush, an astute-looking lawyer, with a world of wisdom peering through his forensic eye; "how do you account for that?"

"By the simplest axiom of philosophy. The olden blood has been tainted with adverse elements; cause produces effect; an evil branch, though grafted upon a good tree, will not produce sound fruit. A good tree inoculated with a poisonous sap must degenerate, and bear blossoms cankered at the core. Thus, whenever I behold a stigma blot the fair name of one of the ancient race, without hesitation I conclude that there has been evil communication. Centuries hence it may be that, as Aaron's serpent swallowed every other, the few untainted waifs spared by oppression may yet leaven the vile mass with which they are incorporated, and infuse a better ingredient to change and sweeten its bitter quality. But it will not be in this generation, nor the next—it must be the work of time. Meanwhile, let no man in my presence asperse the indigenous race, or father upon the posterity of the Celt the opprobrium of the demoralised, and the crimes of the issue of the usurper of their heritage."

"Your argument is good, sir—and to return to our text," said Hussey Burgh, with approving gesture, "a man may disgrace his ancestor's good name in his own person, or he may by his own virtues reflect some light upon a bad patronymic; but the rule holds good withal. The stream brackish at its source will be ill-flavoured to the end; a fount crystal and pure from the spring will continue, if not contaminated, sweet and wholesome to its destination. Have you been many years in France?"

"First saw the light there eight-and-twenty years ago, sir, in company with my twin brother,"—he smiled at Hugh. "My great grandfather left Ireland with the 'wild geese,' after the Treaty of Limerick. He was then a mere boy."

"Is it the wont of your family to come into the world in pairs?" laughed Henry Grattan; "for I do not find

any name so general as that which you honour. Chichester Fortescue must have some work to fix your degrees in heraldry."

"Ours, sir, is a family which, decimated by the sword, and scattered to the four winds of heaven," returned Hugh O'Byrne, with sadly modulated voice, "might tax the ingenuity of a herald's college to marshal in place. So many archives lost, so many links of the direct line scattered, or entangled and obscured among the vassalage of the once numerous clan, by the very act adopted by some members of relinquishing the affix, we might be compared to a fractured mirror, whose dissected parts wanting would defy the skill of the craftsman to restore in its integrity. We have only to be thankful a few authentic remnants are left, sufficient to reflect back 'the light of other days,' and rescue the name of Fiach Mac Hugh from oblivion."

"It is of no use, you see, to stand against the powers that be, and resist the Government," here soliloquised, in tone half-deprecating, half-admonitory, a matronly dame of kindly aspect, and figure tending to *embonpoint*; "far better go with the stream than against it;" her voice died away like the cadence of a curfew bell, to be answered by the vibrating chime, of more silvery accents, of a lady, her *vis-a-vis*, who, disclaiming the logic of her sagacious senior, firmly yet courteously said:

"I am not of your opinion at all, Mrs. Day. Betimes Government must be resisted in its encroachments upon the liberty of the subject. Had Henry,"—glancing proudly at her husband—"not made the stand he did against it, where now would be the blessing of the Constitution we enjoy, and the benefits he secured to the country?"

"Well, yes, my dear Mrs. Grattan; that's true," responded the sonorous tones of the judge's aunt; "but I fear we won't have them long. You know it is bruited about that they are going to take the Parliament from us."

"That they are mooting such a step is no secret," observed an elderly aristocratic dame, with incredulous gesture. "To accomplish it will be *toute autre chose*."

"So it will, Lady Moira," returned Henry Grattan,

with decision. "We will hold our Parliament with a grasp that shall but relax with our lives: and, though I am quite aware that strenuous exertions are being made to cajole or coerce us into the surrender of our fortress, they shall not succeed."

"Be not too sure," said Hussey Burgh, with a significant shake of his head. "What may not a Government achieve that addresses itself resolutely to carry a point, and is not scrupulous as to means?"

"And to whom neither organs, agents, nor means are wanting to carry out their design," said a gentleman seated near him. "There is at this moment a system of corruption being carried on within the walls of the Castle, which would disgrace the annals of any country, and so I will declare publicly, when called upon in Parliament. Government has hinted—as yet only hinted—it will spend half a million to bribe supporters in the House, and that every man shall be the victim of his vote. Byrne, circumstanced as you are, having no particular interest in the country, you are debarred by your creed from serving as a patriot, and no special interest in a senate from which you are excluded the right to represent your borough, you might be well excused for stepping forward and canvassing Government favour by an offer of your service and influence at this juncture. You would be received with open arms, and your terms, however exorbitant, meet ready acceptance. Castlereagh proposes that every nobleman or gentleman who returns members for the Union shall be paid, in cash down, fifteen thousand pounds for every member so returned; and as to sinecure places, you may have any you choose for your friends for the asking. Forward, I say; now's your time!"

Robert Byrne, who was peeling an orange, slowly lifted his eyes, calmly reposed them upon the speaker, and said: "Now is not my time, nor never, Plunkett. I am not of soul so poor as to merge public good in private interest. No, my friend; albeit, as you truly say, I hold neither place nor part in the legislation of my country, I cannot for that selfishly ignore aught that concerns its weal. Let others

who may think differently hold out their hands for the sop; I put mine, gloved, clean, and empty, into my pocket."

"Look you here," exclaimed a voice from the lower end of the table, as a man of bright, intellectual countenance, impetuously pushed the sherry from before him, and, leaning forward, continued: "though I don't mean to give my vote against it, I simply ask you of what use is our Parliament? What good is it doing? There is no law or justice in the land. It connives at guilt; it takes no cognisance of the state of the criminal code in existence. What is the consequence? Look at the state of the country: is it not a duplicate Republic of Venice? Is it not a *fac-simile* of the Bastille in France? Can any man, however free from crime, traverse in security and freedom our public thoroughfares. Is he not liable at any moment to be arrested with impunity, at the will and pleasure of any other who makes affidavit that he believes he has suffered damage, without showing when or how? If the man thus deprived of his liberty seek redress, he finds no spot on which to lay his hand. The accuser only swore a general affirmation that he had been damaged;—who can prove a general negative that he had not?"

"True!" observed Kendal Bushe. "It proves that reform is needed in the criminal department; it proves that Parliament has many abuses to redress, and may be supine in its action; but not that it is of no use, Mr. Ponsonby, or that it confers no good upon the country at large. Look, for instance, to the public works carried on under its auspices. What has intersected an impassable country with roads? What has nearly connected by inland navigation the Eastern Channel with the Western Ocean, and changed the face of the land? A resident Parliament. Could this be supplied in Westminster? No, sir; nothing can supply for a resident Parliament, watching over national improvement, encouraging manufacture, commerce, science, and applying instant remedy to instant mischief, but a native Parliament."

"Facts are stubborn arguments," chimed in Henry Grattan. "How came Parliament to demand free trade?"

Because it sat in Ireland, and members in their own country were influenced by Irish sympathies. They did not like to meet every hour faces that looked shame upon them; they did not like to stand in the sphere of their own infamy; they saved the country because they lived in it. Take away the Parliament, transfer it to another site, and see what will result—absenteeism of its aristocracy; drainage of its wealth; neglect, decay, and desolation. May heaven avert such ruin! Yes, sir; you say well. The blessings procured by the Irish Parliament for the last twenty years are greater than all the blessings conferred by the British senate for the last century, and have more ameliorated the condition of the country."

"Now, sir, you have just come to the mile-stone; halt there," said Robert Byrne. "Though no statesman, I can read State policy, and I can divine by sigil and augury the secret thought of politicians. Think you, my honoured friend, are English Ministers asleep?—or do you fondly deem that, making truce, and waiving the antagonism of centuries, they will survey with complacency, without one jealous pang or emotion of envy, the enfranchised vassal holding up her head and so rapidly gaining par?—Never. It will not be endured: accept my words as prophecy. England, ere we have had time to recover breath, will again set her heel upon and crush us to the dust, from which, by the aid of your good hand, we had arisen."

"She can't do it, I defy her!" thundered Grattan, excitedly striking the table with his hand. "With three millions of men at our back, our charter in one hand, and a sword in the other, shall we fear to assert our freedom? Ministers may propose to buy what we cannot sell—our liberty. For that they have no equivalent to offer, and to wrest it from us by force is out of the question."

"What is the meaning of the martial law under which the country has been placed, and the cruelties at which humanity shudders, even now being perpetrated upon a peaceful and unoffending people by men vested with frightful and unlimited power, and left irresponsible for personal vindictiveness, avaricious rapacity, or any other vile motive, to wreak atrocious barbarities upon their

victims, if not to goad them to desperation?" demanded Robert Byrne. "You heard of that affair between Carhampton and Berwick?"

"Carhampton is a dog-fiend!" muttered Grattan, looking very thoughtful. He paused a moment, then resumed: "It is true, under the Mutiny Act lately proclaimed, I know not why, and the suspension of the Habeas Corpus, insolent, ignorant, and obscure ruffians, armed with vile jurisdiction, have too frequently vented their worst passions upon the objects of their vengeance. A magistrate asserted lately before the Irish House of Commons it was necessary to flog many of whose guilt he had secret information from persons whose names he could not disclose. Rather illogical and arbitrary proceeding that, you will say; but what has all that to do with reference to Parliament, save to strengthen my determination never to be satisfied or desist from my work, so long as the meanest cottager in Ireland has a link of the British chain clanking to his rags. He may be naked, but he shall not be in irons. What is it you say, my Lord Moira?" he continued, addressing the nobleman who sat opposite, and had till now been a taciturn listener.

"Why, that, with our friend Byrne, I surmise some foul play, which everyone does not see through, is on hands. What is the meaning of this overwhelming military force of armed squadrons, licentious and undisciplined, daily being poured into the country? What means the outrages committed by them with impunity upon a quiet and defenceless people? There is some diabolical scheme afoot, be it what it may."

"Indeed," said the Dowager Lady Moira, "things are come to a pretty pass when Lord Carhampton could threaten our chaplain, Mr. Berwick, to send him on board a tender for presuming to oppose him in his tyrannical conduct to that poor man at Esker. Don't you think so, Charlotte, my dear?"—to a lady friend opposite, Mrs. Cockburn, who merely nodded assent; then turning, she addressed the hostess, whose attention was engaged by her three beautiful children, who had come in for the dessert, the youngest of whom was exigent and mono-

polising in her pretty pettish humour: "How happy you must be, Mrs. Byrne, enjoying in the peace of this charming seclusion every domestic bliss, exempt from the thousand anxieties that beset those whose lot is cast in the vortex of public life, and whose very days are not their own. How I envy you!"

"I do not know, Lady Moira, that I am so much to be envied," retorted Mrs. Byrne, with a smile, which a red spot on her cheek, and a touch of acrimony in her accent, belied. "It is not enviable to feel one's self a nonentity in the world, to be as it were a pariah in the social sphere among those whose only title to precedence is the fictitious superiority conferred by their fashionable tenets. I do not, for being a Catholic, hold myself inferior to those odious creatures, Lady Clonmel and Lady Barrington, who would have flouted me at the last drawing-room at the Castle but that I let them see I would not submit to it."

"You were quite right, my dear," cried Mrs. Day, with a look of approbation, that acted as oil cast upon troubled water in calming the perturbed spirit of her friend. "Lady Barrington and Lady Clonmel are very assuming, as all parvenues are, and have need to be kept in their place. I quite admired your spirit when you asked Lady Clonmel whether she had not the privilege of getting her cloth at first cost, and if she would oblige you by procuring some patterns of superfine, for pelisses for the children. Lady Barrington immensely enjoyed poor Lady Clonmel's confusion in being reminded of the shop, and became quite humble and obsequious to you afterwards, I noticed."

Mr. Ponsonby smiled, and said: "I tell you what it is, ladies of the ancient *régime*, if Government persist in its course of cashiering all its former aristocratic supporters, whose honesty and principle refuse to abet its present measures—to wit, the Duke of Leinster, Lords Shannon and Granard, Connolly, O'Neill, myself and others—and sell peerages for money, as in the case of Kilmaine, Cloncurry, and Glentworth, or make them the remuneration of dirty service, as in the case of Donoughmore, Clonmel, Newcomen, Lifford, Cartelon, &c. &c.—it will put you to

the point of your wits to hold your own against the incursion of the newborn magnates, and many a passage-at-arms and wordy war shall, I ween, have to adjust your claims of precedence and honour. Ay," he added, in tone of chagrin, "the old nobles of the land, when it will not subserve to tyranny, may stand aside and give place to sycophants who, pandering to those in power, and becoming the willing tools of every filthy job, shall strut and swagger forward with unblushing effrontery and usurp the stations vacated by honest men."

"But," exclaimed Robert Byrne, with animation, "what, after all, is the patent and glamour of nobility, acquired by ignoble means and dishonoured at its very source? Is it not but the counterfeit, the forgery, of the genuine coin which, bearing the authentic impress of its intrinsic worth, challenges every test? The fictitious tinsel of the mock jewellery, the garish frippery, the insignia of shame that indicates without adorning the courtesan, and which is at once despised and reprobated by the sense of the virtuous. Methinks no man of independent mind would aspire to emulate such patterns, or seek to jostle in a crowd of mercenaries for distinctions that confer no dignity."

"Upon my word that's very true," said Mrs. Day; "and I am quite of opinion that those new-made titles and peerages won't supersede the old ones of our nobility and gentry. Mr. Byrne—O'Byrne; excuse me—have you been long in Ireland?"

"Only a few months, madame," returned Miles, with grave, quiet smile, answering the interrogation of the old lady, who, appearing to evince much interest, continued:

"And you fled from the revolution in France, being royalists. Are there any other members of your family?"

"Of our immediate family, only a step-sister, madame," replied Hugh, whom the next question had challenged; "a mere child, whose mother, my father's second wife, having died in Ireland, to which she returned after his decease, her little girl was bequeathed to the guardianship of her grandmother, now dead also. We found the child in the care of an old woman, her nurse, running wild as a

goat among the hills. We took her, and have arranged to place her at a boarding-school in Dublin."

"You did well. At what school do you place her?"

"At a Misses Hodges', in Stephen's-green."

"I know;—very proper persons, and much patronised. Very pious and evangelical, too. You could not do better. Do you live in town yourselves?"

"Occasionally we stop in town, madame, but mostly in the country. We have no fixed residence till we arrange our future plans."

"Why did you not bring the little girl here, Miles, for a day or two?" said Mrs. Byrne, rising as a signal for the ladies to retire to the drawing-room. "Mind you bring her some day to play with my pets. I should like to see her."

"Madame, Euphemia must finish her education before she can appear with grace in a drawing-room, or commend herself to your kind favour," coldly responded Miles, with ceremonious bow, and remembering how the child had heretofore been lost sight of by her wealthy relatives.

"How I hate those two imperious men!" whispered the hostess confidentially to Lady Moira, as the train swept through the doorway, held open by Hussey Burgh.

"They certainly appear to think a good deal of themselves, and to hold their heads high," laughed Lady Moira; "but they are very fine and good-looking. They would pass for persons of consequence in an assembly;—upon my word, I think I'll ask them to my next."

"Do, my dear; they'll set off your rooms very well," counselled Mrs. Day. "Young men are always an acquisition; and these, with their black hair, dark eyes, tawny complexions, and continental manners, have such a foreign air about them."

"They'll create quite a sensation, and end by eloping with an heiress," laughed Mrs. Byrne. "I wish, I am sure, they would. They shall have my cordial co-operation. Shut the door, Georgie"—to the child—and with a little shiver she seated herself near the ample fire, while the ladies, disposing themselves round the hearth, soon launched into a variety of topics, and gave little heed to

the storm raging without, the cold sleet dashing against the window panes, or the blast shrieking and raving around the dwelling of Clare Hill.

CHAPTER II.

THE OLD HUGUENOT HOUSE—72 STEPHEN'S-GREEN, SOUTH.

“ Our little club increases daily,
Castles, and Oliver, and such,
Who don't as yet full salary touch,
Nor keep their chaise and pair, nor buy
Houses and lands, like Tom and I :
Of course, don't rank with us salvators,
But merely serve the club as waiters.

* * * * *

(We often tell the tale with laughter),
Who used to hide the pikes themselves,
Then hang the fools who found them after.”

FUDGE FAMILY.

BORN in a cellar in the purlieus of the Liberty; bred in the gutter of the same classic locality; educated in the university of the stable lanes, with their various departments of slums and alleys of notoriety; at an early age an adept in the lore of vice, and capable of solving the scientific problem of making out a livelihood by his wits; graduating from the lowest rung of the ladder, and ascending through the various phases of barefooted pot-boy and flag-sweeper in Fishamble-street, shoe-black, waiter in a porter-house, felon in Newgate, hackney writing clerk in Patrick's Close, hosier in Smock-alley, attorney-at-law, editor of a newspaper, &c. &c.; owner of a fine mansion in Stephen's-green, and the handsome chariot, with arms emblazoned in a capacious mantle on each panel, and crest engraved on every buckle of the silver-plated harness, which has just set him down at the door of his residence, along with Judge Norbury, one of his most intimate associates, Francis Higgins, *alias* “Sham

Squire," one of the most infamous notorieties of the day, with a blustering air of self-conscious superiority struts through the vestibule, thronged with fawning menials (hirelings of the most disreputable of their class), and with his companion proceeds, puffing and panting, to the dining-room, to make his excuses to the select party of guests already assembled for the unavoidable circumstances which had so long detained him at the courts; and as, full of *empressement*, he renders his apology, the courteous guests, graciously anticipating the sumptuous entertainment in perspective, condescend to assure him the *contretemps* is quite *en regle*, while, swift as magic, beneath the combined activity of many-liveried attendants, an array of savory dishes, garnished with crystal vases of rare and costly wine, grace the board, and regale the olfactory nerves of the company, who, without further ceremony—for it is a gentlemen's party—marshal themselves in place. With silver ladle the host commences by dispensing turtle-soup—the genuine article—on Sèvres china; and, like the full red moon gleaming through a fog—but, no, we must not libel the fair planet by such simile, but confine ourselves to say that, viewed through the steamy vapour curling from the tureen, the bloated visage, stereotyped, as it were, with loathsome characters of vice, the coarse features, indicating in every line the rude stamp of ill-conditioned birth, the gross type of countenance made grosser by luxury, and unameliorated by the humanising influence of any refining or gentle association with which he had ever come into contact, did not present an object calculated to win or to attract admiration, but, contrariwise, that from which the eye of a casual observer might involuntarily recoil as from some spectacle not good or pleasant to look upon. But custom may reconcile aversion, and the partiality of friendship may weave a mask, efficacious as the silver veil of Mokanna, to disguise the hideous lineaments beneath, and impart to them even a glamour of mythical divinity. So, in the opinion of his compeers, spirits of kindred affinity, Francis Higgins ranked high as he did in his own, which was exalted indeed; to his defects and blemishes

they being quite as blind as he was himself; of the circle, moreover, closed around him, truth to record, not one could look into the mirror of his own conscience and view there the fair reflexion of a soul unsullied by passions that communicate an impress of their own to every trait of the physiognomy. First in place, on the right hand of the squire, is a dapper little man, whose character is unmistakably portrayed in his aspect and bearing: stars and decorations glitter upon his brilliant uniform, a smile flickers upon his lip and brow, yet in vain would the most scrutinising observation seek for the faintest trace of nature's patent, confirming title to nobility in the mean, cruel, depraved expression of countenance of Luttril (Lord Carhampton), commander of the forces, as flippant, supercilious, overbearing, he takes the lead in conversation, exacts and engrosses the chief attention and homage of all. His *vis-a-vis* is Chief Justice Lord Clonmel, corpulent and vulgar, in each attribute displaying the perfection of wit and talent, absence of dignity and unscrupulosity of honour by means of which he had achieved his promotion from the ranks of the democracy to the station of a peer, upon whom even the halo of a coronet could not confer an adventitious lustre, or his ability of sarcasm, swagger, and ridicule, invest with an ægis that rendered him invulnerable to the barbed arrows and dagger thrusts of those whom his injustice and harsh rigour had converted into foes, effervescing with the impoisoned gall into which they had dipped the point of the weapons that ultimately wrought his bane. Next in order is John Toler (Lord Norbury), overflowing with exuberant spirit of conviviality, *bonhomie*, and waggery, and retailing with infinite humour the *bon mots* and lively sallies of wit, with which he was wont facetiously to cheer the flagging heart of some one or other of the hecatomb of victims whom it was his vaunt to have sentenced to the extreme penalty of the law at a single assize. Opposite to this benign and philosophical judge, with brow as obviously developing the organ of self-approbation and demeanour, claiming definition of *bon ton*, serene, imperturbable, and complaisant, sat John Claudius Beresford, and not to be rivalled in boastful

pretension of service to Government by any. He expatiated freely upon the merits of the inquisition established under his auspices, and the numbers who, succumbing to torture of various species, administered under his personal direction at his riding-school in Marlborough-street, and other flogging depôts, had expired under the knout, or goaded into the delirious raving of insanity had become, as it were, oracles uttering the doom of others, haply unconscious of the why or wherefore of their destiny. In juxtaposition with this high priest of sacrifice and expiation, oracular response and divination, towered, erect and formidable, with bristling whiskers, and the feline glare in his eye of a tiger about to spring upon a prey, Lord Kingsborough, Colonel of the North Cork Militia, reputed patentee of that improvement on the foolscap, the pitchcap of more than the scalping efficacy of the Indian's knife, to rend the skin from the head, the secret from the brain of the patient operated upon by the simple contrivance.

Below the stall were duly ranged in order Town Major Sirr, at intervals casting his bleary eyes heavenward at the peroration of some narrative of blood, piously, as it were, invoking a benison on the deed, his large bony face and ruby complexion sadly defying all his efforts to look sanctimonious the while, yet, not disguising the bitter sternness of heart, engendered by conscious feelings prompting the necessity of perpetual steel armour under his clothes to protect him from some avenging stroke aimed at his life, and compelling him to snatch owl-like by day, at his demesne residence of Cullen's Wood, a few hours' uneasy rest, not daring to seek by night the slumber that hushes all the world in repose. Covertly jeering at the pharisaical demeanour of his colleague, bluff Major Swan, not godly inclined, revels in profane licence of speech, and ever and anon elicits a sigh from the latter for his reprobate condition; Major Sandys, with the basilisk gaze of his green, mottled eyes concentrated upon the gorgeous plate before him, and pondering where he might discover and open a mine of the dazzling metal in which his soul delighted; and Captain Armstrong, demure, sleek and

soft as a muff, so bland, so gracious in deportment, so winning in aspect; the silky worm that glides into the core of a fruit and cankers it, was not more gentle, more insinuating in its advances; his smile was engaging from its very simplicity and meekness; and he smiled and smiled, and the smile seemed as much a part of his face as the lip it wreathed, and the cheek on which it glistened. He was discreet and silent, too, for he spoke very little, and then in low tone and measured words; but his placid, sheep-like eye attentively perused every individual, unobtrusively noted down every impression on memory's tablet, and betimes turned inwardly; while his ear opened to the conversation around, not a syllable of which passed disregarded, made mental calculation of the profit likely to accrue from the harvest he was about to reap, when mature enough to thrust into it the sickle of the mower. Yes, Judas may have had some qualms beforehand for selling innocent blood; but this man had none, and his callous bosom swelled high as, gloating in the prospect of the lucre anticipated, he beheld in vision the heads that were to fall, and measured each drop of the blood that should fill his cornucopia of gold. What a pandemonium! cries the astounded reader, half-incredulous; what a conclave of unredeemed iniquity, without one contrasting spot to relieve the dark monotonous shade of the picture, without one vista of mind, heart, or soul, animated or inspired by one touch of divine grace, one gleam shining through the gloom;—not one. But in Satan's divan is it not so? And we know upon high authority that the demon, with seven more, bad as himself, have made their habitation in human bosoms; here they seemed to have established an empire, and no exorcist was invoked to dispossess them.

The soup had been disposed of, and replaced by a haunch of venison, when Lord Carhampton, sipping a glass of wine, addressed the host, and said: "So you had such a busy day at the courts, and as usual, more committals than acquittals, I fain say?"

"Pifh, ifh!" aspirated the squire, sniffing up his breath and blowing like Vulcan resting on his anvil. "We

weren't idle, I warrant ye; the black-dog* is cramfull; we've sent out some score fiats; three fellows are sentenced to swing, and—but where's the use o' talking, the country's going from bad to worse."

"Thanks to Lord Moira, Sir John Moore, Grattan, Burgh, Abercrombie, and a crew of such officious intermeddlers with the policy of Government," made response Lord Clonmel. "It is too bad. Their sympathy with the disaffected Papists encourages them in their rebellion, and gives a sanction to such lax Protestants as set themselves up for liberal, to espouse their part; such dereliction of principle, and the arrival of Lord Moira in the country to strengthen it, has been very unfortunate—quite nullifies all our coercive policy. I hear Grattan is going to England?"

"Small loss wherever he goes;—the very worst of the lot" observed Claudius Beresford, with a stupid, innocent face that seemed to belie the ferocity of his natural disposition, till his words discovered the bias. "Plague it! I've scored the backs of fifty with five hundred, that didn't half well deserve the lash as these very knaves. Would I had the handling of them *ad libitum* for a day; and if they did not come to their right mind, and learn wisdom, it were not my fault. Government is too lenient by far with this stiff-necked country."

"Hang me, I don't know what more it can do," observed Lord Kingsborough. "I'll trouble you for a little of that excellent Carlow ham. The very means taken for the pacification of the people, and which would subdue and strike terror into the hearts of any other in the world, appear only to stimulate them to more vigorous resistance, and I'm sure we haven't spared the rod of correction: the picket, scourge, pitchcap, free-quarterings, and half-hangings, have all done their duty; yet the effervescence is working up to an explosion, I see that."

"Psha! because you are too indulgent, and only half hang!" jocosely cried Lord Norbury, chuckling at his own wit. "Look at me, now! I'm a humane man as any here, and yet in the discharge of my duty I do not lamely halt

* The common jail.

half-way, else would I have sentenced a hundred and ninety-eight men to be whole-hanged at one assize? No, sir, the moment I clapped my eyes on every man brought up, that was enough: with that intuitive perception natural to me, I saw at once he was a culprit, and so pronounced sentence, qualifying it with perhaps a little seasonable *jeu d'esprit*, to amuse the poor fellow, and reconcile to meet his doom with *sang froid*, and to do them justice, they are upon the whole good-humoured enough, and ready to take it well. 'Paddy' says I, once to a wight that looked rather disconsolate, 'don't be down-hearted, my lad.' He was one of the labourers who had conspired to shoot Carhampton for some little frolic of my noble friend among their wives and daughters.—'Since this world isn't a place to your liking, or good enough for you, you ought to be obliged to me for giving you a lift into the other.' 'Thank ye; long life to yer honour,' says the fellow; 'an' if I don't like it I'll come back an' let ye know.' He has never come back; so I'm to suppose he likes it, ha, ha, ha! But that's my way: the moment a fellow is brought before me I know him at first sight, and give him his *congé*."

"Then you are a physiognomist like Judkin Fitzgerald, who can tell a Carmelite traitor by his face, and forthwith apply the remedy without troubling us for a *fiat*," said Lord Clonmel.

"Fitzgerald has no right to take the law in his own hands, and in his own parlour flog a man to the bone," retorted Beresford, angrily. "He should bring him to the whipping-school; but every man in a little authority snaps his finger at the law now-a-days, and does just what pleases him."

"Because the law gives him latitude, sir," cried Major Swan, brusquely. "Isn't it because we are empowered to carry out the designs of Government by our co-operation, that it is left discretionary with us to use our authority to punish' whomsoever we consider to be or have information of being malcontent or disaffected. Lord Moira made a moan that in one night, thirty houses of the peasantry were burned. Had Government paid attention to him could we

have gone on with the work. Last night there were fifty set fire to in several parts of Meath; and, you know, the soldiers quartered upon the people have been privately noticed by Lord Carhampton and their officers that they have full licence to act as they judge proper where they suspect rebellion, and that in no case will they be held responsible for their behaviour; so if Judkin Fitzgerald is out of place he only errs in zeal for the Government."

"Zeal may betimes be dangerous too, and a man have as much to fear from jealousy and treachery of an administration; better be discreet than go too far, even to serve a patron," soliloquised Lord Clonmel, with musing brow; then lifting his eyes and glancing softly into the face of Captain Armstrong, he continued, with bland suavity: "How are affairs progressing at Bond's? Any reinforcements coming to the United Irishmen?"

The gentleman addressed paused a moment before he made answer, then coquettishly dallying, he smiled, simpered, looked mysterious, and in soft, purring tones rejoined:

"We are getting on to our satisfaction; recruits abundant, plans maturing. Pray, don't probe me deeper just now." He winked significantly, and Lord Clonmel, taking the hint, resumed, turning to Carhampton:

"By-the-by, isn't it a scandal and a shame to see a papist, such as Byrne of Cabinteely, in possession of that fine estate, and so many good Protestants lacking an acre of land. How comes it?"

"Is Byrne a Papist, though?" said Claudius Beresford. "His father, George Byrne, read his recantation and dropped the affix when he married the sister of the Marquis of Buckingham."

"Ay, did he," cried Carhampton, with a sneer; "and a fine convert he was: seldom if ever crossed the threshold of a church, scoffed the bishops, was never known to entertain a minister at his table; and though he lied in lip, in heart he was as papistical as the Pope of Rome could desire. Had I my will I'd hang all such humbugs. —But what of the present man, does he go to church?"

"Was never seen inside of a church door," briskly returned Clonmel. "Married a papist, old Devereux of

Carrigmanan's daughter, and had his children baptised by a priest. How comes he to hold the property?"

"Why, I'll tell you; easy enough," cried Claudius Beresford. "The Buckingham family back him up, and they are powerful; their interest and patronage is his prop and shield. So, friend Higgins, you needn't be gaping with mouth wide open, as one that expected a plum to fall into it. Byrne of Cabinteely is as firmly rooted in his ground as you are seated on your cushion. Pass over the decanter, Sandys."

"Armstrong, why don't you get him to join the United Irishmen; he would be an acquisition," exclaimed Clonmel, eagerly, and studying the countenance of the captain to learn from it, had an object so desirable been already compassed. But Armstrong, fiddling with his glass, made hesitating reply:

"Lord Edward Fitzgerald and I called upon him; he received us kindly, and made us stay for dinner; but he refused point blank to listen to our overtures; said he had made up his mind never to interfere in politics; warned us against the danger of our own surreptitious proceedings; hinted that we would be betrayed by spies; in short, used such admonition and caution that, fearful of Lord Edward taking alarm, I hurried him away."

"What about those kinsmen of his lately come from France, whom I have met at General Cockburn's?" demanded Beresford. "What are their politics—revolutionary, no doubt?"

"No," returned Armstrong, dejectedly. "We sounded them, too, and they won't join us. Michael is the only one of the clan we found pliant."

"Fudge!" roared Major Swan, whose potations were beginning to render him animated, "I'll stake my soul—yes, sir, my soul—that every man of the name is a rebel at heart, a—hiccup—covert sneak, disguised Jesuit, and—hiccup—I'll pay the forfeit to Beelzebub if I be wrong in my verdict."

Major Sirr, contemplating Major Swan with affectionate interest, sighed heavily, threw up his eyes, and said, speaking thoughtfully: "We may, by a very simple process

arrive at the conclusion we desire. I daresay Mr. Byrne is a very loyal person : far be it from me to incur reprobation by judging or condemning any man unheard ; but, then, we cannot accept any man's character of himself on trust. Now, I humbly suggest that if some of the people about the village, say a labourer or two, or some of the domestics were apprehended and questioned, we might elicit some reliable information as to the real opinions and proceedings of that family."

"Questioned!" growled Major Sandys, darting from a pair of wolfish eyes a glance at once savage and contemptuous at Major Sirr. "Are you spoony enough to fancy you'll worm out the truth by questioning such lying knaves?"

"Then we'll scourge it out of them, if that will content you," returned Major Sirr, with conciliating demeanour.

"Give them the pitchcap, the picket, and the rope; if these won't do, try fire and burn it out of them," said Major Sandys, mollified. "Let me help you, and see if we don't get some of them to swear a criminal accusation against this fair-faced gentleman, and pull off his sheep-skin cloak. If we do succeed as I anticipate, mind I will covenant for a share in the booty; for if he be found treasonable, all the Buckinghams in the kingdom, with the viceroy to boot, can't save his neck from the rope, and his estate from confiscation;—and my Lord Norbury won't object to pass sentence."

"Not in the least," facetiously returned the judge, with a hideous grimace of humour. "I shall never demur to render, by word or deed, to any man his due; but this candidate, being of more note than usually comes within my sphere, must be awarded a funeral oration, to impart solemnity to his exit. I must look up the Bible for some appropriate text. There is nothing I like so much or more to my taste than weeding the world of *mauvais sujets*, and all objectionable characters."

"Would I could minister to your predilection, and hand over Hussy Burgh and Fitzgibbon to your judicial authority, with Magee, and a few more I could name," muttered Lord Clonmel, while lightning flashed from the eye,

scowling beneath his morose brow ; " then might I know peace and breathe free once more."

" I shall be happy to oblige you, if ever occasion should present itself," returned the judge, with a flourish and gesture of condescension, which aping the ludicrous, set the table in a roar. He was interrupted by Squire Higgins exclaiming :

" But what about Byrne of Cabinteely ? Can't ye go a shorter way to work ?—Can't ye *fiat* him ?"

" Yes, by a *lettre de cachet*, a good mode of proceeding," observed Carhampton ; " but he is so well-hedged in, I doubt if we could reach him that way."

" Close investigation," suggested Lord Clonmel, " might discover a hole in the hedge;" and he directed a shrewd glance at Higgins, who quickly caught at the meaning, but enlarged upon it, crying with exultation, and a leer of execratiating cunning in his small piggish eyes : " Bodkins ! or pick one."

" The very thing," re-echoed Major Sandys, suddenly excited into a twitter of exultation at the opening prospect of plunder to be partitioned. " Nothing easier—leave the working out of the job to me ;—nothing easier than to supena a few perjurers, hem !—witnesses, I mean—ha, ha, ha ! This good wine of yours, Squire, sets the tongue rolling like a billiard-ball from the mark. Yes, leave it to me ; we'll dislodge that Papist fox, an' put good loyal Protestants in his shoes, ha, ha, ha !"

" I wouldn't bet on your success," responded Beresford. " Camden, after outraging the feelings of every staunch Protestant in the kingdom, by laying the foundation-stone of the popish seminary of Maynooth, and bringing popish bishops to dine at the Castle, won't be likely to set his face against a solitary Papist ; and Castlereagh, though out of temper with the country, and, like Achilles, only to be appeased by blood, has, nevertheless, among the Papists one or two chums, whom, despite their creed, he favours. Depend on it, if the influential friends of Byrne raise a hullabaloo, as they are certain to do, and memorial the powers that be, you will have your labour for your pains,"

"You needn't have any such fears," returned Lord Kingsborough, looking reassuringly at the blank visages of Higgins, Sandys, and the rest. "Camden hates the whole popish brood not the less for his being compelled to make a concession to the clamour of the hottentots—that went against his stomach. Castlereagh finds it expedient to his policy to gull the people with the show of patronage of one or two of their demigods. Do we not see that while he strokes them with one hand he scourges them with the other? Fitzgibbon outgoes him in detestation of the country and the people, and boasts aloud he will make the Papists as tame as cats."

"Get along; you've nothing to fear; they'll not stem the course of law in favour of a Papist in whom they have no special interest, unless he makes it himself worth their while, and in that you can circumvent him."

"But my Lord Clonmel won't countenance it; he's a patriot and favours the Papists," cried Major Sirr, ogling his lordship with satirical humour.

"Hold your jaw! I was a d——d ass!" vociferated Clonmel, half-frowning, half-mirthfully. "Having a talent for acting, I got up one morning moonstruck with the notion that I would play the double rôle of tribune and statesman to achieve popularity, without one iota of sympathy in the matter. I voted for the Roman Catholic Bill, and by so doing fell to zero in Government favour, without gaining public applause, as I wouldn't go the whole hog with the people, like Grattan. I can't think how Burgh contrives it: he's the best actor I know of, for he keeps with the people and Government both; and as to my patriotism, why, all I have to say is, I'd be sorry to sanction, by my example or approval, the unnatural villification of fatherland in which Lord Clare vents his spleen, or the atrocious coercion of which he is the advocate for crushing the people; but as for courting popularity again by patronising this measure or that, one man or another I declare off——"

"Isn't that a hard case about young O'Driscoll?" here chimed in Major Swan, diverting the theme to another current. "As fine a young fellow as ever you saw, Protes-

tant and all, choused out of his father's estate and illegitimatised by some flaw in his birth that debars him from inheriting——"

"Glad of it;—conceited puppy!" ejaculated Claudius Beresford.

"One of the godly saints that all your blandishments could not entice to become one of our club in that Arcadian locality and elysian bower of Crane-lane,"* laughed Kingsborough, winking over a glass of punch at the squire, who naïvely returned, pursing his flabby nether lip:

"I hate these pious ones; they come to no good for all their sneaking whine and cant."

"He's a great crony of as big a Pharisee as himself, Moira's chaplain, Berwick, that I was within an aim's ace of having sent on board a transport for meddling in favour of some rebel scoundrels I thought fit to punish at his gate," exclaimed Carhampton, and with an expression of countenance that in its concentrated malignity was scarcely short of demoniac, he added, jerking his head menacingly: "He had better be careful, lest I may put my threat into execution some day."

"Look you here, now," said Clonmel, interposing, "parsons, bishops, and churchmen of every grade, I hate the cloth; they are beginning with that insolent, avaricious despot Ager, a self-seeking, greedy, hypocritical lot. I pick but one grain of wheat out of the bushel of chaff, and that man is Berwick. Let him alone. And, faith, I'm sorry for Maurice O'Driscoll;—not that I think many men are worth being sorry for;—but his father, Sir Phinius, a jolly old toper and foxhunter, was the most reckless, hospitable, and best sample of an Irishman I ever knew. Many a pleasant day I spent with him in Garryowel, where the wine flowed like water and we turned the night into day, and followed the hounds from morn till night. His wife, too, an Englishwoman and a Protestant, was as nice a person as ever I met. Pity any informality in the marriage should have illegalised it and cast her son adrift. I'd help him if I could; but out of office myself now, what can I do?"

* An infamous gambling-house kept by Higgins.

"Psha! the milk of human kindness will never stagnate in your bosom!" cried Beresford, ironically. "Methought Carleton's ingratitude had cured you of the weakness of making men——"

"Worthless wretch!" aspirated Clonmel, scowling wrathfully.

"O'Driscoll would just pay you in the same coin. Guilford Colandisk is worth a score of such holy humbugs."

Clonmel smiled: "Ay, Guilford Colandisk is a cork that would float when a plummet would go to the bottom. He has the great talent of prevaricating with a plausible face, and he is not afflicted with that propensity to veracity that mars many a man's fortune."

"Neither does he make wry faces at pleasure, or set up to be a censor of others by implied deprecation, refusing to join in their amusements or make himself one with them in any pursuit," fiercely retorted Beresford, who discerned a latent sneer in the invidious commendation of his friend's eulogist. "Guilford for my money; I'm glad the shock-headed Davidsons have got possession of Garryowel."

"I'm not," said Carhampton.

"Why?" cried Beresford, snappishly.

"Because it will be the means of thrusting the pauper for ever into our path to jostle us for alms."

"Pooh, spurn him!" And with this exhortation, the cloth being removed, the gentlemen turned round to the fire and to cigars. Beresford continued in laudation of his friend: "It puzzles me why Sir Henry Cavendish, who stands so well with Government, to whose politics he is such an obsequious bolster, doesn't get a shove up for his relative Guilford. Many a one with half his pretensions has climbed over his head. Now, I'll lay a wager, O'Driscoll, if he don't make out to pension himself on some patron, will be for putting his shoulder to the wheel to work upward: he's just a fellow that looks like it, vigorous and pushing."

"Look you here," said Clonmel, "I don't mean to disparage Guilford; he's just the man to thrive: fashionable, eminently gifted with *finesse*, engratiating in manner, never ruffled in temper, insinuating with all; yet he lacks

energy ; he is—let me say it in plain words—an idle spendthrift, whom no patronage could benefit. O'Driscoll is his antithesis, yet possessed of those very qualities, or rather lacking those very requisites which must obstruct his least advancement and counteract his fortune. No man can prosper who knows not how to dissimulate, and who presents himself to the world labelled as to what he is, an impulsive man ; showing in his aspect every emotion of his bosom is an unsealed letter to be taken advantage of by friend and foe. A man whose tongue eschewing diplomacy will thunder out the words in his mind without modification, and whose bolt upright spirit won't flexibly bend to circumstances or policy that is no man to prosper in the zig-zag progress of life. No, I wouldn't, if I could, give my hand to uphold such a ponderous weight. If you would assist a client he must of himself help you."

"Fact!" curtly affirmed Carhampton, spitting into the fire. "When did you see our *chère amie*, Higgins?"

"Which do you mean—the ballet dancer, or that she-dragon Llwellen?"

The question had scarcely passed the lips of the squire, when the door was flung open and the personage distinguished by that respectable sobriquet entered, unexpected evidently, to judge by the consternation and commotion occasioned by her appearance, which we shall only describe by saying she was a coarse, vulgar-looking female, passed her *première jeunesse*, with an excessively bad, forbidding countenance, bold, presuming air, free, indecorous manners and flashily attired in a harlequin combination of colours composed of expensive material, and decorated with a mass of ill-assorted yet costly trinkets. Much *empressement*, however, was evinced by her gentlemen friends to receive her with honour: she was marshalled to the chair of state, presented with wine; and long after the smirking menials had withdrawn, loud talk and boisterous laughter betokened that her presence had contributed largely to augment the social gaiety of the company.

CHAPTER III.

MOIRA HOUSE—USHER'S ISLAND.

" Britain, by thee we fell ; ungrateful isle !
 Not by thy valour, but superior guile.
 Britain, with shame confess this land of mine
 First taught thee human knowledge and divine :
 My prelates, and my students, sent from hence,
 Made your sons converts, both to God and sense ;
 Not like the pastors of thy ravenous breed,
 Who came to fleece the flocks and not to feed."

SWIFT.

MOIRA HOUSE ! What reminiscences of the past are conjured by the name of this once patrician dwelling ! What subject of meditation for the moralist of the present day !—what theme upon which to dilate to point a moral or adorn a tale !—what traditions of public note or private personal record cling round its walls, not mouldered by time, not broken by the iconoclastic violence of the sieger, or denuded by the fiery war-trail of the foe, nevertheless standing a sad memento, one among many, indeed, of vicissitude, a mute historian of the wreck and ruin wrought by the hand of the spoiler upon the devastated metropolis of a subjugated country ! Situate on Usher's Island, overlooking the river, and within a few minutes' walk of the Phoenix Park, the eye of the stranger is attracted by an edifice, too insignificant to engage admiration, yet too striking to pass by unnoticed—a long stone façade of two stories, embellished by many windows, regularly disposed, overlooking the Liffey, and a small court separating it from the thoroughfare without. This is the Dublin Mendicinity, the receptacle of the most wretched paupers and beggared misery and refuse of the city. Not so at the period of our narrative—a princely mansion located in the, at that time, fashionable quarter of the metropolis. Moira House, the residence of Francis, second Earl of Moira, and his mother, the dowager countess, was the brilliant scene of constant magnificent entertainments, and the familiar rendezvous not only of the chartered aristocracy, their

noble peers, but of all the genius and worth of the land that found ready patronage and favour from the exalted personages whose enlightened minds and superior intellectual attainments so well adapted them to act with courtly grace the part of host and hostess, and delight the charmed circle of which they were the centre. Early in the month of March, '98, again those spacious saloons were thrown open for the reception of unlimited guests; for, exclusively of the specially invited, all who came were welcome. Through the crimson drapery of the drawing-room glowed the dazzling lustre of the chandeliers; from the topmost storeys* unveiled windows streamed a blaze of torchlight, reflecting a red flame upon the dark water gliding peacefully along below and dispersing the gloom around. The suite of lower apartments—dining hall, vestibule, &c.—basked in luminous radiance, wrought by the converging rays of many lamps, commingled with the warmer effulgence of the ruddy hearth. Viewed at a distance, rising through the sombre trees and extensive gardens (the former now out down, the latter covered with buildings and offices), Moira House glittered like a diadem on the brow of night, a thing most fair and beautiful to gaze upon entranced. Nor were other allurements wanting to add their quota to its attraction: music echoed from its halls; the din and murmur of surging crowds swell from its court, lighted by flambeaux, as chariot after chariot, how many, in those palmy days of ephemeral splendour, alas! too soon eclipsed, rolling up, deposit their gay freight, and depart to make way for new arrivals. Whose is this close carriage, coming slowly along and obstructing the course of several handsome equipages following in its wake? It draws up; Viscount and Lady Castlereagh alight, and, amid ranks of powdered and bedizened footmen, and fussy attendants, they proceed leisurely up the great staircase. Swiftly follows a splendid landau and pair, and the suppressed hisses of the populace, venting imprecations upon his predecessor, explode in a stormy cheer as Henry Grattan and his wife are recognised and greeted. Next comes the

* Taken off in 1826, when the house was sold.

popular Earl of Charlemont, and Conolly of Castletown, whom Government is not wealthy enough to bribe with place or pension for his support, in its effort to carry the Union. In quick succession dashes up an equipage, with four prancing steeds, all hot and blown, from a distance, and yells of rage and execration from the populace proclaim the arrival of Lord Carhampton, styled in familiar parlance among them Satanides. Darting a savage glance at the mob, his lordship makes swift exit, but has scarcely escaped from the howl that jars unpleasantly on his ears when it is renewed and prolonged, interluded with strange notes like the cries and mewings of cats, and snarling of dogs, as a curricule, drawn by a pair of fiery horses, bolts along, and a fierce, dark, beetle-browed man, with lurid eyes and menacing aspect, springs out, scarcely waiting for the horses to be pulled up, and with the ringing step and tramp of a centurion or a soldier of the old Roman iron legion, he paced along, and disappeared within the vestibule, scowling back silent retort to the groans and hisses rained down like a hurricane and invoking malediction upon Fitzgibbon, Lord Clare. Succeeding this burst of frenzy there was a lull of silence, as a handsomely appointed carriage and four rolled quietly up, and the slow, revolving wheels arrested, Robert Byrne of Cabinteely and his wife descended, and without obstruction proceeded on their way. Robert Byrne was not a public man, hence not recognised as such; but many a murmur in the throng, wafting to his ear a kindly "God bless ye, sir," "Long life to yer honour an' the noble lady beside ye," "Good-luck to the ould stock," &c., demonstrated that in his private capacity of country gentleman of ancient descent, the object of their good-will was both known and respected by the ubiquitous people. Closely following, dashing up with lively, spirited coursers, all animation, vigour, and suavity, Hussey Burgh, and his presence—at once courteous and dignified—was hailed with acclamation that denoted him as one of the popular idols. After him, in chariot and pair, came in much state and parade, with running footmen, Claudius Beresford, and in swift rotation Sir John Moore, Lord Kingsborough, Judge Day, General

and Mrs. Cockburn, Sir Ralph Abercrombie, Archbishop Ager, with a stream of less conspicuous celebrities; and soon the sumptuous octagonal saloon of Moira House, pronounced by John Wesley, in 1775, more elegant than any he had ever seen in England, was thronged with a brilliant assemblage of all the *élite* of birth, rank, and station, and all the flower of genius, literature, profession, art, and science; convened into a focus by the magic wand of a host who was not only a peer, but a gentleman in the true use of the term, who, while offering refined hospitality to all, directed his courtesy to each, and never lost sight of the least as well as the highest in company; and the fascinating manner of a hostess, peculiar to hereditary lineage, simple, polished, inartificial, which, combining dignity with affability and goodness of heart, imparted the ease and charm of a home circle to the reunion, where even adverse politicians, for the time being, waived hostile attitude, and without rancour advocated each his opinion, or maintained his ground, fencing with wit and argument to worst his opponent, and if not converting a proselyte, at least dispelling a prejudice. Conspicuously occupying a velvet-cushioned chair, near a window which reached from the ceiling to the floor, and whose sides were inlaid with mother-of-pearl, lounges in easy attitude Lord Castle-reagh, and cold as an icicle, impassive as a statue, he appears to listen with apathetic smile of real or feigned indifference to a warm discussion maintained between several gentlemen grouped close at hand. Their debate is so interesting (for they are rivals in politics), and carried on with so much fire and vehemence of declamation, that circle after circle of intensely excited auditors form a cordon around them, and baulking the efforts of the hostess to restore the kaleidoscopic aspect of the saloon with ever-varying yet commingled particles. It is broken and divided into two sections—the card-tables, monopolised by several coteries of ladies and a few gentlemen at one end, and the dense concourse at the other. In the full blaze of her proud beauty, Lady Castlereagh, standing beside a young man of bright, laughing aspect, occupied with the puerile pastime of playing a quizz, alternately with air of curiosity and

attention, contemplated her noble husband, to decipher what impressions, if any, were wrought upon his phlegmatic nature by dint of sharp home thrusts and side blows betimes levelled with aim, or glancing haphazard from the conflicting parties at himself, but imperturbable as idol of Dagon throned in its nich, pinnacled above the wrangle of mortals to which it was sublimely inaccessible. Lord Castle-reagh heard Walter Hussey Burgh, the favourite of Government, in stormy retort to Lord Clare, loudly inveighing against his patron, and championing the patriot cause, as, fearless and deprecating, he exclaimed :

"I am prepared with proof to maintain the assertion I make here, and shall renew upon every occasion. The usurped authority of a foreign parliament has kept up the most wicked laws that a jealous, monopolising, ungrateful spirit could devise to enslave the nation ; to answer the most sordid views the country is treated with savage cruelty ; the words penalty, punishment, and Ireland are synonymous : they are marked in blood on the margin of the statutes."

"I do not mean to deny," exclaimed Lord Clare, with a browbeating look at his intrepid antagonist, "that coercive measures—the only measures through which the sense of this refractory malcontent country can be appealed to—are in force, but I deny that they are one-half as severe as they are alleged to be, or as the exigency of the need requires ; and if the perverse people so much complain of the application of the rod, let them be taught by it to learn the lesson of subordination and good behaviour it inculcates : so prove their title to exemption of punishment."

"To utter invectives against people under pretence of advice, and, in goading them to insurrection, sanction ourselves with pretext for slaughtering them, is methinks, sir, weak argument in our favour," gravely chimed in Henry Grattan, meditatively resting his broad Indian chin of talent upon his hand, and rather looking away from than at Lord Clare, who with high, imperious tone, rejoined :

"You jump at wholesale conclusions, Grattan, as absurd as they are without foundation, in your enthusiastic devotion

to your hobby. You advance the chimerical charge that because a few disaffected ringleaders of sedition are chastised, we are goading the people to insurrection. I deny it!"

"Unfortunately," returned Grattan, meeting the wrathful eye of his adversary with a firm brow, "we have evidence against you. I appeal to the officers of the army standing beside us—to Lord Kingsborough, Lord Carhampton, Sir Ralph Abercrombie, Sir John Moore, and all—whether they cannot, and do not, by virtue of the Mutiny Act—an Act of the British Parliament—fine, confine, torture, and execute at will and pleasure upon their own judgment and verdict their fellow-subjects here; nay, more, have not the very soldiers licence to ill-treat and injure in their lives and property the people upon whom they are quartered? Is a country so circumstanced free? Have a people so deprived of protection and security for life and property nothing to complain of, no excuse for standing up in their own defence against aggression and tyranny?"

"Pooh, pooh," cried Lord Kingsborough, contemptuously. "Doesn't the Czar knout his serfs? The more of the lash you give slaves the better: their hides are tough, and it agrees with their constitution."

Lord Moira, who stood near, turned away with a shrug of his shoulder, and observed aloud, with ill-concealed look of disgust: "Seeing what I have seen, and hearing what I have heard, in this unhappy country, were I an Irishman I should be a rebel."

"'Tis hinted by some, enemies, no doubt, my lord," smiled for the first time, thawing and breaking the ice of reserve, Lord Castlereagh, "that you sympathise with the rebels. I need not say your friends reject the accusation."

"My friends are very kind," drily responded Lord Moira, perceiving in this insinuation a covert allusion to his intimacy with Lord Edward Fitzgerald, whose sentiments were too well known to be doubted; "but be they disagreeable truths, or merited encomium, I trust I am free-born Briton enough to speak my mind, and I avow that if the country be drifting, as it is evidently, to insurrection, it can show cause wherefore."

"That's an insidious impeachment of the Government," said Lord Clare, bitterly, "a serious accusation against Pitt, whose policy it impugns. I'd warn you, my lord, be more guarded in expressing yourself."

Here Lord Clonmel interposed, and though animated with little interest in the country or the people, yet for the sufficient reason of opposing his hated antagonist, he warmly undertook its defence, exclaiming with stentorian energy, and with knitted brows frowning back with interest the dark frown of Fitzgibbon.

"The noble Moira has not said amiss. The Irish are the most oppressed, abused, and pillaged people on the face of the earth; Russian serfs, Turks, Hottentots, cannot be compared in condition with that to which they are reduced by British government and British planters; and if they were not so content to stuff, and guzzle, and submit to the state of things, long since they'd have brought their masters to the right-about: but drunkenness is their bane, and gives the greedy hordes of English and Scotch swindlers such advantage over them; yes, there's the rock they go to pieces upon, excess in drink."

"I crave your pardon, my lord, for declining to believe you have solved the question of the enigma that militates against our national cohesion and holds us in chain of bondage," exclaimed a sonorous voice, slightly tinted with a foreign accent, and a suspicion of brogue. Every eye turned inquisitive as Miles and Hugh O'Byrne, with easy address the former, and open smile the latter, advanced into the circle. "I may not deny," continued Hugh, for it was he who spoke, and his countenance expanded with humour, "that we of the mere Irishry are keen enough to appreciate a good thing, and wise enough to enjoy it. Hence we by no means profess, like good Mahomedans, to abjure the wine cup, or surreptitiously quaff it in our sleeve—farther still from our heart or our thought to put on demure lip and denounce, as an evil thing, the soul-inspiring elixir of our mountain dew; but this I deny, point blank, that we addict ourselves more to the beguiling stimulant than our English neighbours around us, who, if the indulgence be blamable, should themselves set us a

better example. For instance, as it is not censurable, I may quote examples without risk of detraction. Is it not well known that Judge Boyd, regarding the beverage as truly *eau de vie*, keeps a supply of it on the desk before him when in court, to revive from time to time his flagging spirit? Have we not seen Baron Moncton swaying along by zig-zag lines to the bench, and Chief Justices Jeffreys and Scroggs, Dawson, and others of English name and pedigree under convivial influence, jostling sober citizens and progressing by circuitous rotation, threatening their perpendicular with ignoble shock, to their destination? You must allow I cite evidence in support of my plea;" and he closed his peroration with a loud, cheery laugh, leisurely applying a pinch of snuff to his rather red and inflated nostril.

Lord Clonmel surveyed the speaker with smooth, silky smile, whose chief expression was confiding innocence and engaging frankness. Lord Castlereagh, same time, with aspect half-amused, half-sardonic, lifted his gold eyeglass and contracting his eye into a parenthesis of wrinkles, ogled Hugh with scrutinising attention; but Lord Clare, whose animosity to Lord Clonmel was yet exceeded by the detestation and scorn in which he held his native land, broke forth in rabid vituperation:

"Bosh, sir! the people, that is, the Irish popish class of the population you stand forward with so much confidence and presumption to defend or extol, I know not which, are beyond your ability, or any body else's, to belaud: a drunken, lying, thieving, knavish lot. Would we were quit of, to Beelzebub!"

A brief pause succeeded this oration, for Hugh O'Byrne, alternately pale and red with speechless wrath, seemed as he glared upon the speaker like one at a loss for words in which to launch out in crushing retort. Grattan and Hussey Burgh, with compressed lips and moody brow, were silent; no one appeared to care to draw down upon his head the lightning from the electric battery of Lord Clare's domineering insolence, when a young man, of noble bearing, lofty in stature, and of fair complexion, swung himself through the circle, and *vis-a-vis* confronting the despotic

lord chancellor, whose frown had oft annihilated many a less resolute spirit, coolly addressed him while he abruptly swept a tangle of auburn curls from a bold, expansive brow, and his lips curved in a scornful smile, spoke, too, with somewhat of an English accent, and his physiognomy was altogether more Saxon than Celtic :

"Halt, my Lord Clare! Snaffle, whip, and spur, where are you galloping to with the character of the country? Born, bred, and reared in it, son of an English mother, therefore impartial; son of an Irish father, therefore patriotic, I claim to know as much of my countrymen—I mean the infamous, Irish, popish class—as any man, and deny utterly that you have drawn an accurate picture of them. Most true, there is abundance of thieving, lying, knavery, and vice in the land; but where do we meet it on every hand, at every turn, but among the hog's draff of alien import? Look here—a hundred years ago, Sir Henry Piers, himself of English stock, describes the scullogues, as the Irish called them, that is, the English newly-imported farmers and planters of Westmeath, as a crafty and subtle lot in all manner of bargaining, full of equivocation and mental reservation in their dealings in fairs and markets, where in cheating and lying they make it their work to overreach anyone with whom they deal. Now, I maintain these worthies, who were not long enough in the country to be so soon corrupted by contact with the air or with the soil of it, and had little or no communication with the aborigines, who were all banished to hell or Connaught, to be infected so easily by their example, must have come over to the country ready schooled adepts; hence, when we have to find fault with our countrymen's morals, let us be just and saddle the right horse."

As the young man, flushed and excited, paused and gazed around with air of conscious triumph and self-approbation, fearless, and defiant of Fitzgibbon's mortified aspect, and the deprecating sneers of Claudius Beresford, Lord Carhampton, and Lord Kingsborough, for which he felt the approving smiles of Grattan, Burgh, and others an ample equivalent, Lord Carhampton slunk aside as Claudius

Beresford, hastening to the relief of his crestfallen friend, said, with cool *sang froid* :

"I'm sure, my dear O'Driscoll, there is no need to lose temper and evince so much heat of argument on a subject of import so small as the vices or virtues of your ragged aborigines. If it will please you to laud the idols, why we shall, *par complaisance*, vote the tatterdemalion crew all Olympic deities, canonise rags, and swear that mud hovels are paradisiacal bowers. Don't look so grumpy; we shall leave you nothing to complain of on the score of our liberality, ha, ha, ha!"

Miles O'Byrne who till now had been a mute auditor, wrestling with a chaffed and fuming spirit, broke all control of himself, and ignoring the oft-repeated cautions of his more prudent kinsman, Robert Byrne of Cabinteely, stepped up, and despite the warning adjuration whispered in his ear, "For God's sake, Miles, beware of making enemies!" the unsubdued Milesian spirit flashed out, and without pusillanimity or trepidation, withal calmly, he spoke, facing Beresford :

"You shall pardon me, sir, for observing that taunts and stinging jibe and sarcasm levelled at the poverty, nakedness, and misery of our people come with ill-grace from your lips. When the invading alien and usurper first came among us, long ere the name of Beresford was heard of, an English* historian tells us of the cotamore in common use among the people, so capacious, warm, and commodious as to furnish their house by day and their bed by night; their linen-dyed shirts of thirty yards, their gold, their wealth—where is it all gone? You found the poorest clothed; you have left the wealthiest naked!"

"Upon my veracity, Mr. Byrne," returned Claudius Beresford, with mocking sympathy; "if what you state be true——" And he rolled up his eyes, and raked his beard with his fingers, sparkling with gems.

"Ay, there's the hitch," exclaimed Lord Carhampton, sneeringly. "Not in the least doubting Mr. Byrne's statement——"

* Spenser and others.

"O'Byrne," interposed Miles.

Without noticing, his lordship continued: "Is the statement of the historian of those benighted times, whoever he was, worthy of credit? The man, no doubt, was a papist; and the Right Hon. George Ogle asserted only a few days ago that no papist's word was reliable, that a papist would swallow a false oath as easily as a poached egg, ha, ha, ha!"

"And were the Right Hon. George Ogle to repeat the same words in my presence, I would smite him in the face, and say to his teeth, he lied," retorted Miles, indignantly, the blue veins, swollen with wrath, standing out like cordage on his lurid, stormy brow. "If it please you, my lord," he added, haughtily, "to bear him my gauntlet, I shall hold myself prepared to meet his message."

"I don't believe," responded Carhampton, with insulting contempt, "that my honourable friend would accept a message to meet anyone, ahem! not quite recognised—that is, excuse me, not quite on par——"

"Say it out!" exclaimed Miles: "not a gentleman up to his mark, or according to his definition!" And he uttered a laugh of derision, and towered with air and mien so formidable, that Carhampton subsided, cackling in a murmur, "Ah, ahem, ah, papist, you know, I mean! Ogle is, ah!" Miles exploded in a sentence, that, to render concisely, on our part, consigned Ogle as a free gift to the realm below; and boiling with ire, he was turning to withdraw, when a little man, with a crooked face all distorted with comic humour, and beaming with talent, laid his hand upon his elbow, saying: "Hold, my irascible friend; only it's out of court I'd charge you counsel's fee for my opinion. I've a little devil of a scrivener in my office; his father was a broom-seller, and his mother is a washerwoman that makes up shirt-frills nicely;—look there, she does mine. Well, the little object, her son, is saving up money to buy a peerage; so if you take a leaf out of his book, and invest your money or honour, no matter which, in some one of the titles now auctioning off to the highest

bidders, you will be fully qualified to exchange shots to your heart's content with the first duellist, and neither duke nor honourable can say you nay — . I'll leave the fee to your lordship's generosity :” and grinning and bobbing his head, the odd little man stood smirking at Miles, till Lord Carhampton, nettled and irate, addressed him petulantly :

“Pray, Mr. Curran, is any allusion affecting me conveyed in your very satirical and ambiguous speech ?”

“My good lord,” retorted Curran, with asperity, “if I drop my cap must you needs stoop to pick it up ? And if you will put it on, whether it fit you or no, how can I help that ? Don't pester me with such querulous puerility.”

Carhampton sloped away, but Claudius Beresford, unawed by wholesome fear of the rod of Curran's caustic wit, maliciously said, accosting Hugh :

“Pray, Mr. Byrne, are you of the number of those astute philosophers and wise statesmen who sympathise with the revolution in France ?”

“Far from it !” bluntly returned Hugh ; “we were attached to the throne, and repudiated the ferocious factions that have disgraced themselves and their country.”

“Then, Mr. Byrne, you do not interest yourself particularly in our American war ?”

“I must beg to set you right, O'Byrne is my name,” said Hugh, loftily, as he noted the studied slight implied by the mispronunciation of his patronymic, and laying emphasis on the prefix, despite the appealing look of Robert Byrne, who, with anxious eyes, he saw watching him apart.

“Pooh !” interposed Lord Clonmel, twirling his thumbs ; “what does it signify ? What use is a handle to your name ? Your relative is content to be Mr. Byrne, and he's the head of the family.”

“*Chacun à son gout*,” said Miles ; “Mr. Byrne of Cabinteely has a right to please himself ; the same privilege I claim to be awarded myself.”

“O'Byrne,” here remarked Hussey Burgh, with glowing smile of appreciation, “is undoubtedly a name

of evil augury to Saxon ears. A manuscript of the fifteenth century states that 'Emon Oge O'Byrne entered with force the king's castle of Dublin, and led away prisoners and booty to a vast amount.' Hence, our apprehensions are not, perhaps, unjustifiable upon hearing the dread name again bruited to our ears, on the very scene of his ancestor's foray."

"A swarm of howling savages from the hills they were," groaned Bishop Ager, with cough and wheeze. "I wonder any man blessed with the advantages of the civilisation conferred upon him by our Government, doesn't blush with shame, and strive to ignore and forget his barbarian ancestry, instead of perpetuating the memory and setting it up for a boast."

Lord Clonmel, who detested the bishop, made swift way, and smiled benevolently upon Hugh, striding, like a Titan, to level him with a thunder bolt; and even Lord Clare, grimly amused, condescended to look with mollified interest upon the dauntless champion, whose bold bearing and high spirit challenged his respect—when not colliding with his own—while all, in deep suspense awaited the clash of the rival combatants. Hugh spoke in accents hollow and vibrating with passionate emotion:

"Ignorant, indeed, your Grace must be of the history of your country and mine to advance such assertion at this hour of the day. This is not the time or place"—he glanced at Lady Castlereagh, twirling her fan, and the laughing youth beside her, playing his quizz* with accelerated energy—"to enter upon an argumentative dissertation to refute an idle calumny, or dilate upon incontestable evidence; suffice to say, upon the testimony of ancient historians of erudition and reliability, corroborating each other with proof, that whatever of enlightenment or knowledge in religion, arts, science, literature, and civilisation you vaunt to-day, England, first emerging from barbarism, obtained from Ireland, and owes to her early Irish preceptors, who expended life, and the labour of weary

* A toy then in fashion.

years, unrequited by any earthly guerdon, in her service. Hence, the stigma with which your Grace would brand my country and my ancestors, is as absurd, as though a pupil just half perfected in his education, were to turn about, in a splenetic fit, and revile the school and the master from which he had received the rudiments of learning that inflated him with a vain complaisance in his own abilities.

"I only quote Cambrensis for my authority," responded Bishop Ager, heaving a deep respiration, and with a contemptuous look at his adversary, whom he beheld already annihilated by the missile he was about to hurl: "Cambrensis tells us that the Irish were truly barbarous, not only in the fashion of their dress, but in their long, luxuriant hair and beard, all at variance with modern custom."

"Indeed!" retorted Hugh, scornfully. "Well, perhaps so. If the hair and mode of costume, by which various people designate their nationality, be a criterion by which to judge of their claim to civilisation or refined taste, we shall waive the question, and accept the impeachment, which we may share in common with French, Spaniards, Chinese, Turks, and Arabs, who, I daresay, all respectively hold their modes to be the gauge and test of perfect social refinement and excellence. But I, too, can quote Cambrensis, giving another version of his experience, and drawing a line of demarcation between the Saxon and Celtic races. He says: 'The Saxons are not to be compared in bravery or intelligence to the magnanimous race of the Celts.' Waiving his further animadversion and invective, out of good taste, I shall merely confine myself to this one passage of the English historian, in citation of our title to respect on the score alone of merely natural superiority to those who would so stupidly and glibly defame us. Again, Gerald Barry, speaking of the Irish race, says, 'they came from the grandest race that he knew of on this side of the world, and that there are no better people under the sun.' How do you reconcile such contradictory statements but by candid admission of your own whimsical inconsistency and prejudiced judgment?"

The bishop, bewildered and puzzled, looked helplessly blank and wrathful, and the subject was likely to have died in peace, when an officer, in the uniform of the Camolin cavalry, seeing his Dagon floored, hastily came to the rescue of the portly god, and set him again upon his legs.

"Sir," he exclaimed, drawing up his fine figure, and surveying Hugh with the air of an autocrat dictating to a serf, "your illustrations are all one-sided versions. You appear to be a person of some education, however; hence, doubtless, you have heard of Dean Swift, as good an authority as can be quoted, and what is his opinion; what does he say of your boasted race of mere Irish? 'That he would no more consult them on any matter than he would swine, and that he no more considered himself an Irishman, because he happened to be born in the country, than an Englishman, born in Calcutta, would consider himself a Hindoo,' so much did he despise your paragons."

"What else did he say, Captain Esmond, worthy of recording, this celebrated Dean?" quietly demanded Hugh.

"Say, sir?" reiterated Captain Esmond, with sharp, sententious voice, and glancing at the youth with the quizz, "Why, sir, what more could he say? Did it not express all that could be said in a volume?"

"Surely," chimed in the young man, suspending a moment his quizz to make the sagacious observation, "that a man being born in a stable didn't make him a horse."

Hugh, with a smile, half-derisive, half-compassionate, turned to look at the last speaker, in whose wild, boyish physiognomy, not being an adept in reading the mystic lore of futurity, or deciphering fortune by visual hieroglyphics or oracular speech, he failed to discern the future hero of the Peninsula and Waterloo, the renowned Wellington; so, after indulging in a sarcastic smile at the expense of the flippant lad, he reverted to his antagonist, and, in a tone marked by calm bitterness, said:

"Dean Swift was a wise man till he became less than that which he scoffed;—nevertheless, he would have

added discernment to wisdom, and been commemorated for justice, had he added, in extenuation, that centuries of brutalising English tyranny and oppression had at length wrought such change, and done its work. What else could be the result of enforced ignorance and banished religion, but darkened minds and warped intellects?—of persecution, famine, and misery, but the evils consequent thereon? You may not convert men into helots, and wonder to find them acquire the vices of slaves;—'tis too much to expect from human nature. If you violently expel the divine instincts of humanity from his bosom, marvel not to behold him transformed to a savage beast. This you have done in time gone by, this you are doing to-day with the people, as far as lies in your power. 'Ware the retribution."

"Then, sir," said a very elegant-looking young man, who had just come from the card-table, and with bland smile and insinuating accent, addressed himself to Hugh, "rebellious and revolutionary subjects would meet with lenient forbearance, in lieu of condign punishment, at your mild hands. No doubt you advocate the principles of the French Revolution and the American War!"

"Not both," curtly returned Hugh. "Deprecating Government despotism and oppression in any land"—he smiled involuntarily as his glance encountered the alarmed visage and imploring eyes of Byrne of Cabinteely fixed upon him, with mute entreaty to guard his words—"I know not what other course was open to America to preserve her freedom than that which she has been compelled to adopt. France had no such plea to urge. Of her Revolution we have seen enough of the results to disgust us with such reformation, and we have only to read our own daily statistics of crime to know what store of tools, adapted to any villainy, infamy, and iniquity, are ready-made at hand and fashioned, to desire to see such used or made the weapons of sedition and anarchy."

"But —," resumed the young man, courteously. His further elocution was abbreviated by Lady Moira charging into the group, which she dispersed right and left, exclaiming, authoritatively:

"Come, come, you gentlemen, not being gifted with the patience of Job, I may no longer see my drawingroom converted into a debating club. Time enough when we lose our Parliament to set up a little one of our own. Here, Guildford Colandisk, suspend awhile your argument with Mr. O'Byrne, and betake yourself to the Muses—Mr. Moore and Miss Fitzpatrick are going to give us a melody."

"Mr. Byrne would, I daresay, prefer a jig," said Lord Carhampton, who would perist in calling Miles and Hugh, notwithstanding their protest, Byrne, and glancing superciliously at the young men."

"We shall have dancing, too, jigs, waltzes, reels, and measures to please everyone," tartly returned Lady Moira, brushing past Carhampton, whom she greatly disliked, but whom she was constrained, nevertheless, in deference to expediency, to invite as an honoured guest to her assemblies. "Maurice," she continued, in a *sotto voce* to O'Driscoll, "as you are a stranger here to-night, let me introduce you to a partner;—she is not a beauty, but she is titled and wealthy, and greatly admires you."

She drew him forward some paces to where a lady, with sandy hair, pale blue eyes, white eyelashes, flat, doughy-complexioned cheeks, sharp-pointed nose, and thin lips, very sharply compressed at the angles, sat, in a cloud of blue silk and gauze, playing with her fan, and ogling them with surreptitious gaze.

"Lady Alicia Luttrell, allow me to introduce Mr. O'Driscoll," and, while the lady and gentleman mutually bowed and smiled, the good-natured dowager, who constituted herself *chaperon* and patroness of the deserted children of fortune, hurried away to perform a similar kind office for Miles and Hugh O'Byrne, to whom she made herself sponsor, presenting the former to a young lady not conspicuous for the smallest pretension to beauty, but possessing a good-humoured countenance, and, as an only child, heiress to an immense fortune and estate. Miles made courtly acknowledgment of the favour conferred, but stole a side look from Caroline Danvers' broad grin of satisfaction to the more attractive partner bestowed

upon his brother, and as his eye rested a moment, charmed, upon the sylph-like figure and face of Ethel Courtney, he became conscious that he was himself an object of notice to a lady of high patrician grace, who stood near her, when Captain Erskine, Commander of the 5th Light Dragoons and Romney Fencibles, sauntering up with the easy swagger and *nonchalance* of self-important superiority, and bowing low, requested Miss Esmond to honour him as a partner in the first waltz, to which she assented with an air of cold indifference that, in the opinion of Miles, made her appear more like an empress condescending to a suit than graciously conferring a favour. However, Flora Clemence Esmond was very beautiful, and the cynosure of many eyes; so Colonel Erskine seemed well content with the accorded boon. But now, Lady Moira lifting her hand to impose silence, all stood mute, as a young lady ran a prelude along the keys of the piano, and presently a plain little man, whose appearance little indicated the soul of genius that glowed in beauty within, came forward and accompanied as she sang with thrilling vocal power—

“The harp that once through Tara’s halls.”—

When the soul-stirring strains had died away on the resounding chords, and the plaudits had subsided that greeted the youthful performer, Lord Carhampton, addressing the little man, whose features transformed, as it were, by the magic of melody into an expression almost divine, seemed to assume another type, and eyeing him with a look that could not be interpreted as patronising, said: “By Jove, Moore, you ought to be thankful your nativity was cast under better aspect; that effusion, in the days of good Queen Bess, who loved not minstrels or minstrelsy, would have cost you your neck, and the State some yards of rope and the hangman’s fee to boot.”

The author of the effusion that would have displeased Queen Elizabeth turned briskly, and with a light and airy gesture, as one who felt rather complimented by the remark, said: “Yes, Queen Bess might have broken the vase, but the elixir it contained would have wafted its

fragrance beyond her reach, perfumed the wings of the wind, and added a gem to the rainbow. Despots may fulminate ukases against school and temple, and paralyse the action of scholar, priest, and bard, but as well might they forbid the grass to grow, and the dew to descend and nourish it, or strive to master the beams of the sun and exclude it from shining save by rule and compass within given space, as fetter the sublime mind, the God-given intellect of man, or eradicate from the land the traces of the Deity in his noblest work."

"Stuff!" responded Carhampton, in low, half-smothered tone of contempt. "It is such doctrines as this, disseminated among an ignorant rabble, that stuff their cloddish heads with conceit, stimulate them to aspire beyond their sphere, to emulate their betters, and breeds disaffection and rebellion in the land, every O and Mac thinking he is grievously wronged in not being acknowledged a royal prince at least, and subsidised as such. Queen Bess was right, and proved her wisdom in exterminating such incendiaries."

No one responding to this invective, Lord Moira, with a smile of encouragement, addressing the lyrist, said: "Favour us, pray, with another melody, Mr. Moore, and as Lord Carhampton has suggested, let us also be thankful that our nativity, more auspiciously cast than that of our predecessors, enables us to enjoy, without incurring penalty, the exquisite pleasure of listening to compositions like yours."

Thus appealed to, Moore yielded ready acquiescence, turned over the leaves of the music book, indicated the song to his companion, and with brow and eye on fire with enthusiasm, gave

"Lrt Erin remember the days of old
Ere her faithless sons betrayed her."

Lord Carhampton, having somehow an instinctive conviction that this melody was especially selected as applicable to him,* whose antecedents were well known, and fancying

* Luttrell, his ancestor, had a pension of £500 from William for betraying the cause of King James at Aughrim and elsewhere.

that every eye perused his thought, with a glare of unutterable malice at the lyrist, who, so adroitly turning the tables and avenging himself, had rendered him a butt for obloquy, when the acclamations that chorused the close of the tuneful echoes expired, with rude, sardonic laugh exclaimed, aloud: "By George! Tommy, so long as you can fabricate such rhyme to tickle the ears of amateurs of jingle, you will bake your bread, and butter it, too, my boy. But how, in the name of common sense"—he looked pleadingly upon the faces grouped around, in every variety of expression, some deprecating, some applauding—"can anyone take pleasure in such dolorous fiction? Do you believe in those fairy tales of Harps of Tara, and Red Branch Knights, and kings with collars of gold?" he continued, bending with mocking smile over the fair pianist, who, with dark, beaming eye flashing surprise, and clear, brunette cheek, deepening to vermilion, looked up and promptly answered:

"Certainly; our ancient history is as authentic and undoubted as the history of the Hebrews, with which it is contemporary."

"I crave pardon; I should have remembered you were one of the blood royal, and hold as gospel all the traditions of the old dynasty," cried the discomfited lord, bowing in affected homage to his kneebuckle; then accosting Ethel Courtney, who stood near, beside Hugh O'Byrne, whom he eyed askance: "You, at least, fair lady, having no descent to boast from the Kings of Tara, may freely adventure your unbiassed opinion upon the subject."

Ethel glanced shyly at Hugh contemplating her with attention and interest, then at Carhampton, and said, in soft, clear accents: "Oh, pray, do not ask my opinion, for I fear you would be disappointed."

"Fie, fie, Lord Carhampton," exclaimed, in shrill voice, his niece, Lady Alicia, tossing the long thin ringlets from her cheek, and glancing at O'Driscoll, who, she perceived with some chagrin, was more complacently occupied observing the syren at the piano than absorbed with devotion to herself. "Don't you know the Normans became more Irish than the Irish themselves, and quite converts to their

flattering creed? So Ethel Courtney is no more an authority than Alphonse Fitzpatrick, who I know believes as firmly in banshees, fairies, and witches as she does in beads and relics, and worships them as devoutly."

A fresh, cheery laugh, musical as a gushing stream, followed this half-angry, half-spiteful address of Lady Alicia, and spread, as if by infection, from one to another of the circle.

"Indeed," exclaimed Hussey Burgh, mirthfully gazing upon the bright, breezy face, dimpled all over with arch-humour and fun, "it must be owned, Miss Fitzpatrick, that the elfin troop discriminated with good taste when they selected the sward of the Emerald Isle for the scene of their midnight revels, and the gem-bespangled caves of the hills for their abode; and as for the witches, what a paradise they must have found here! In England we used to burn them, drown them, and immolate hecatombs of old women, and some young ones; but that was because of our superior enlightenment. See what an advantage that confers upon society! But what has become of yours? we don't hear of any such thing of late."

"May it please you," said Miles O'Byrne, with mien of apparently careless *insouciance*, "when the Lady Alice Kettle was burned by her countrymen at Kilkenny, all our witches took the alarm, judging by the example what their own fate would be, and fled. Moreover, our savage people, who could not abide the smell of charred bones, made such clamorous outcry and striking protest against the outrage to their olfactory nerves, that the practice was compelled to be relinquished. It is possible our masters may revive the practice; atrocities that must inure them to a predilection for the faggot, and cannot fail to imbue the rising generation with a taste for blood, are being hourly perpetrated upon our people by the foreign troops now inundating the country. Mr. Hussey Burgh says true; lacking the superior enlightenment of other countries, and their peculiar ideas of civilisation and refinement, the Irish shrunk ever from cruel persecution, and the annals of the country can show no instance of heretic or witch suffering by fire, death, or torture at our hands. We have

yet the lesson to learn, and our preceptors are doing their best to goad us to the odious task."

"How every tub smells of the wine that's in it," said Lord Clonmel, with cynical smile at Lord Castlereagh, who, sauntering about the saloon now with this friend, now with that, seemed ubiquitous and to have ears and eyes everywhere. "I could easily infer from your sentiments, Mr. Byrne, that you belong to the United Irishmen."

"I am not of their councils," returned Miles, "but heart and soul I am with their cause."

"That's a bold avowal," said Lord Castlereagh, aside to Lord Clonmel, with a look of much significance.

Hussey Burgh, who heard and marked all, anticipating that Miles would, in his impulsive ardour, fatally compromise himself, hastened to cast his protecting ægis over the indiscreet champion, and said aloud: "The fact is, had England not sown laws which have reduced our country to a state of Egyptian bondage, and, like the dragon's teeth, sprung up armed men, no need were there for an aggrieved people to unite in any misguided and futile scheme to obtain redress by compulsion. Nay, my Lord Castlereagh, take not amiss my outspoken impeachment: truths are stubborn evidences. Unwise policy has ruled the country from first to last; we cannot expect aught but a tangled fabric to be the product of a loom weaving discordant threads on jarring machinery."

"Most true; experience demonstrates beyond a doubt the incapacity of this country to govern itself," calmly responded Castlereagh, with a cold, impassive countenance, and a keen light, glittering like wintry sun upon ice, in his frozen eye. "It will be needful for other councils, gifted with cooler heads, clearer judgments, more sage understanding, and various attributes in which we seem to be deficient, to take up the administration and legislate for us before the distracted country shall know the blessing of repose."

Up jumped Henry Grattan, who, from a little *coterie*, of which he was the centre, overheard Castlereagh's speech, and hastened to answer: "Say out your meaning, my lord;

you mean that a British parliament must annihilate our own and enact laws for us : this is the meaning of the extraordinary phenomena we now behold around us—the scourging, burning, picketing, half-hanging and whole hanging, pillage, and merciless cruelty of a lawless soldiery upon an unarmed, defenceless, unprotected, yet most peaceable population : to madden them to revolt, to crush them in blood, and wrest from their then feeble or dying grasp the last remnant of the nationality to which they cling—their native parliament—is this not the programme sketched out by William Pitt and his ministers, to which some parties who claim to be Irishmen are lending themselves ?”

“Methought,” sarcastically returned Castlereagh, with settled asperity of look and tone, “Mr. Grattan found so much to disgust him in this native parliament as to cause him to resign his seat and wash his hands out of it.”

“True !” firmly replied the Tribune. “I could not be a party to injustice ; I could not sanction a parliament that was only the representative of a faction, that only gave voice to a bigoted ascendancy, and ignored the claim and the right of three millions of their fellow-subjects ; that was ready enough to vote for an improvement of the land, but sworn to withhold improvement of the condition of the people ; that was willing to make a road or a canal, but not willing to strike a link from the fetters of the Catholic. Such a parliament needed reform. I could not achieve it ; I could not give eyes to the blind, or ears to the deaf, to make men hear wisdom. I resigned and quitted parliament for the same reason that I am to-morrow leaving the country, because I cannot side with the conduct of Government, or yet look upon the miseries of the people, whom their wild efforts to redress will involve in deeper ruin ; but all this is no argument for depriving us of the right of self-government, of making us a colony without the benefit of a charter, and our nobles a provincial synod without the benefit of a parliament. To depend upon the will of another country, to be subservient to its dictum, swayed by temper, interest, or whim, is the definition of slavery, and who is here so vile as would sell the freedom

of his sons, alienate their birthright, and make them bondsmen?"

"Union with a country so great as England," smiled Castlereagh, "would, in my humble opinion, rather ennoble than degrade us to the condition which you seem to dread. I for one entertain no apprehension as to the experiment."

"Loyalty is a virtue commanded by St. Paul," chimed in Bishop Agar with a husky cough. "'Let every man,' he says, 'be subject to the higher powers,' and hence it is the duty of subjects to yield implicit obedience to monarchs."

"Without contradicting St. Paul, whose precepts and epistles we revere," returned Grattan, "we hold a theory, that if subjects are made for monarchs, monarchs are made also for subjects; and that if it be a duty of one to render homage, the same rule exacts of the monarch to rule with wisdom and justice those who have acknowledged his jurisdiction. But as for our parliament, though great men should apostatise—for, unfortunately, my Lord Castlereagh, you are not the only one ready to abdicate your own privilege, and resign that of others entrusted to your keeping, by pandering to Government—nevertheless our cause, the nation's cause, will live; the patriot orator may die;" and Grattan's voice quivered with emotion, and his eye of fire saddened; for failing health whispered to his heart a presentment that his days were numbered; yet he continued in strain solemnly impressive: "The immortal fire shall outlast the organ which conveyed it, and the breath of liberty, like the word of the holy man, shall not die with the prophet, but survive him, and evermore calling to the nation, with clarion voice shall forbid its slumber, and wake it, generation after generation, to restless strife, till the dawn of a glorious resurrection shall burst upon its head." Exhausted by his excitement, Grattan sunk into a seat, hastily drawn forward by Hussey Burgh, who perceived his failing strength, and Lord Moira hurried to procure a glass of wine, which soon revived his guest.

Meanwhile, Lady Moira, who had been enjoying a *tête-à-tête* with Tommy Moore, and a few others, now made a sign to the orchestra. A waltz was immediately played by

the band. Lord Moira led off with Lady Castlereagh; Hussey Burgh made overture to Alphonse Fitzpatrick, but she was engaged to Guildford Colandisk; Lord Clonmel, too obese in figure to trip the light fantastic toe, steered for a card-table, and planted himself between a ponderous couple, who had just wanted a fourth with their *vis-a-vis* to make up a hand at whist; Lady Moira, having seen every eligible individual provided with a partner, and the room a scene of whirlgig animation, paired off with Robert Byrne of Cabinteely for a game of loo; Mrs. Byrne, with Lady O'Driscoll, the Grattans, and a few others, gathered in a *coterie* for a *conversazione*; Arthur Wellesley had laid aside the quizz to take up with a flirt; and Castlereagh, Fitzgibbon, Claudius Beresford, and a few more kindred spirits retired to hold divan in a remote recess; while Sir Ralph Abercrombie and Sir John Moore sat and conferred together in a nook of one of the windows overlooking the river, and the Earl of Charlemont, with Connolly of Castletown, stood in another, gravely discussing the events of the time.

CHAPTER IV.

THE MISSES WARBECK HIGGENBOGGAN.

"To-night we strive to read as we may best;
This city, like an ancient palimpsest,
And bring to light, upon the blotted page,
The mournful record of an earlier age."

ENDICOTT.

It was late the morning after the evening of the reunion at Moira House, and a fine crisp frosty March day it was; the breakfast-table was laid in the front parlour of one of the best houses in Dawson-street; a clear fire was burning on the polished hearth, and beside it sat, prim and upright, in gown of stiff black silk, and coiffure of Mechlin lace, Miss Warbeck Higgenboggan, looking over the morning paper, with her feet on a velvet-covered boss, while her sister, Miss Fanny, superintended the arrangements of the

breakfast, cut the cold ham, put water into the china teapot from a silver urn, hissing and steaming before her, and betimes, in a rough, dictatorial voice, issued some order to the butler, a demure-looking, elderly man, who, in white apron, and reddish hair, combed sleek over a low, projecting brow, stood, tray in hand, near the door, awaiting commands.

The Misses Warbeck Higgenboggan were persons of great esteem in the opinion of the world, and of great consequence in their own—first, in right of social position, which was good; and independence, which was comfortable; and, secondly, on the score of having lived six decades of years in a wicked world, sinless amid the sinful, bearing characters which defied the tongue of malice to asperse, and sustaining the reputation of principle so rigidly righteous, that they were never known to pardon in others faults they would have abhorred in themselves, or weakly to excuse the least deviation or downward slope in any, from those heights of perfection which, by their own experience, they had found so easy to attain, so more than easy to hold. Hence it is not subject to marvel that the Misses Higgenboggan, the terror of the ungodly, and the criterion and model of excellence and respectability, were looked upon with veneration by old and young, and promoted by general consent censors of public morals, inquisitors proper to adjudicate upon all cases of scandal real or supposititious, arbitrators of the fame good or bad, according to the light in which they might see it, of their neighbours, and, in virtue of their office, styled in whispers, "The Morning and Evening Chronicles."

To describe the appearance of the Misses Warbeck Higgenboggan, we shall merely say their personal appearance was not so pleasing as one might be led to infer from their unblemished fame. The elder lady was short in stature, stout in figure, active and muscular in limb; her face was short, broad, wrinkled, and of the complexion of tanned leather; her heavy chin was feathered with downy beard; her nose was thick and unshapely; and her square forehead and shaggy brows loomed over little pebble-coloured eyes, flinty, brisk, and vigilant; her countenance was matter-of-fact, hard, and

shrewd. Of her sister we need say but that save in height, being tall and slim, with features rather pinched, she was her *fac simile*; and to render the likeness more complete they dressed the same, and each wore beneath their coiffure a front of little barrel-curls of reddish brown hue, fringing their foreheads, and adding to, by contrast, rather than detracting from the appearance of age.

"John," called Miss Fanny to the butler, after she had to her satisfaction adjusted the tea and coffee, eggs, and bread and butter.

"Yes, 'am," responded John, with alacrity, and in accent more mellifluous.

"Tell Miss Fitzpatrick we are waiting breakfast for her."

"Ma'am," returned the butler, and his voice hesitated.

"Well—what?"

"Miss Fitzpatrick hasn't come in yet, ma'am."

"Why—what—where—is she out?" cried Miss Fanny, turning and envisaging John with a severe look, while Miss Warbeck laid down her paper on her lap and sourly contemplated the menial.

"She went to Mass, ma'am, to Denmark-street or Liffey-street, I heard Mrs. Jolly, your maid, say," returned John, with a sulky manner, that seemed to denote it was against his will he answered.

"To Mass!" cried Miss Fanny Warbeck.

"To Mass!" re-echoed Miss Warbeck.

"That will do, John; you may go," said Miss Fanny.

Exit John, with screwed lips, and Miss Fanny turned to her sister:

"What a thing! I suppose this is another holiday?"

"The girl's infatuated," responded Miss Warbeck, in tone of despair.

"You know, Sophy," said her sister, in aggrieved manner, "that when we took Alphonse, two years ago, out of compassion, left as she was a penniless orphan, and at the request of our brother, Jeremiah, her uncle, it was his hope and ours that our precept and example, virtuous training and society, as well as a sense of her own interest, would have weaned her from her superstitions and error; but she is only becoming more hardened, more inveterate than ever."

"I declare, Fanny," exclaimed Sophy, "if it were not for the handsome income Jeremiah allows for keeping her, and the likelihood of her soon being taken off our hands by some one or other of those apes that make a fool of her with their admiration, I would tell her plainly things could not go on so; that we should retract our consent to her following her own religion, since we find she is so persistent in her rejection of truth, and insist upon her going to church. At any rate," she added, after a pause, "I must give her a lecture upon the impropriety of her conduct."

"No use, my dear; she lets it in at one ear and out at the other. It was only last week I heard her with my own ears, when the Rev. Nathaniel Lamb called, cry to the butler, as she made her escape from the parlour, 'Say I'm not at home, John.' I took her to task and admonished her in the most serious manner upon the sinfulness of lying. Would you believe that after I had talked myself hoarse, in the belief that she was paying deep attention to all I said, she raised her saucy face, with a look of such simplicity, and said: 'Aunt Fanny, I'm puzzled about these ribbons; would you have me choose cherry colour or primrose for my new Leghorn hat?' I protest it so took away my breath I did not know what to answer her. If she were eight, instead of eighteen, I'd have given her a good slapping."

"Her Uncle Jeremiah allows her too much pocket-money," returned Miss Sophy, with emphatic gesture: "a hundred a year, paid quarterly, is a great deal too much for a girl to have; and only I borrow a few pounds from her now and again for cards, which she does not ask me for, I would write and tell him. I wonder what she can do with it all: she does not spend it on clothes or jewels; for I'm sure her dress last night was shameful—a white cambric muslin and a coral necklace, just like a child! I really blushed to see that vulgar Miss Damer and satirical Lady Luttrell surveying and evidently criticising her appearance with so much effrontery; then did you see how indecorously she laughed, without the least *mauvaise honte*, at something Lady Alicia said? Only for the cards in my

hand at the time, and that fat woman Damer watching for the trump, I'd have given her a look that would have recalled her to a sense of where she was. But these papists are intractable; I fear 'tis in her blood."

"I took notice she and Guildford Colandisk had their heads together all the evening, though several times I saw Maurice O'Driscoll striving to ingratiate himself with the vain creature," said Fanny, taking the sugar-tongs in her hand and preparing to fill out tea.

"And she'll end by marrying the handsome prodigal, you'll see," cried Miss Sophy, with asperity;—"not that I would think O'Driscoll, a young man without a penny, a better match for her."

"And not too strict in his principles," added Fanny. "Both Maurice and his mother belong to a class I detest, and that is your liberal Protestants, who, forsooth, are for letting everyone have their own opinion, and go their own way: such as these are no better than enemies in the camp, playing into the hands of the adversary. Now, how respectable it would be if Alphonse, instead of throwing herself away upon such tinselled creatures, and forfeiting her last chance of conversion, would but be said by us, who have her interest at heart, and marry that sensible, fatherly, good man, Nathaniel Lamb, who has everything to recommend him—married experience, knowledge of the world, a sacred calling, good independence, and a fine congregation;—how nice it would be!—but no——"

"Hush, here she is," muttered Miss Sophy, with an audible sigh, and at the moment the parlour door opened, and Alphonse Fitzpatrick hurried in, out of breath.

"Oh, Aunt Sophy, Aunt Fanny, I'm so sorry to have kept you waiting," cried the young girl, throwing off her fur-tippet and bonnet, and hastening to seat herself at the breakfast-table. "But I was delayed, aunty, and did not think you'd be down so early, having been home so late last night as we were," she continued, apologetically, and fixing her eyes, dark and mournful, upon the gloomy face of her senior aunt, whose eyes, bent upon an egg which she was opening, did not observe her, but the other, who was watching her sharply, exclaimed, magisterially:

"What delayed you?—what ails you, child?—You are not yourself. What makes you look so woe-begone and dull?" The mist that had gathered to a tear stood like a gem glistening a moment on the dark eyelash ere it fell, and with a sob Alphonse exclaimed in turn:

"I met old Nurse Lanigan on my way home; she was almost out of her mind with grief, and told me how her brother had been picketed last night, and his two sons flogged, to make them discover or inform upon the United Irishmen; and how her daughter Esther's husband was seized coming home from his day's work, and sent bound on board a transport going out to America; and her own boy, Denny, half-hanged; she doesn't know why. She was running half-mad and heartbroken to the doctor to get something for them, and hadn't had a morsel herself for two days, and was all night up doing her best to nurse them. Oh, aunt, isn't it terrible? She said the people all expect nothing else but to be slaughtered. What's the meaning of it?"

"And was that what delayed you?" drily demanded Miss Sophy."

"Yes, to be sure," indignantly retorted the niece, with dry, anger-flashing eyes. "I took the poor creature into a cake shop, for she cried so; everyone was staring at us, and I made her take some buns and a cup of coffee, and stood with my back to the door, and wouldn't let her out till I knew she had eaten and drank enough, then I let her go, and came away home, promising to call on her by-and-by."

"You gave her money, too, I suppose?" said Fanny,

"Well, I hadn't much to give her, only a couple of shillings; but it wasn't money so much as comfort the poor soul wanted."

"I daresay," sneered Miss Sophy. "Poor people are very high-spirited, and never want money, or make poor mouths—oh, dear, no! But, may I ask, how come you to be so tight? 'Tis not on dress you spend your uncle's allowance. You give it to your brother, I suppose, to bolster him up in his profession, and lavish it on everyone

that tells you a tale of distress. I know I was greatly annoyed to see the figure you made last night among so many well-dressed, fashionable girls, of, I daresay not half your means;—not so much as an ornament in your hair had you!”

“Oh, yes, aunty, I had a coral comb. There was Ethel Courtney had not as much, and yet she looked beautiful; and I overheard Mr. O’Byrne, her partner, whisper someone that it looked like a coronet of gold.”

“But she wore a silk dress,” expostulated Fanny. “I fear people will think our niece is a beggar.”

“So I am, aunty;—that is, you know, I have nothing of my own. But Ethel’s dress of amber-green I didn’t like half as well as Flora Esmond’s of scarlet gauze over white satin, with the gold ornaments; she looked like a queen. But Ethel’s was very pretty, and, I daresay, cost a deal of money. I think I’ll get a black velvet, aunty; would you like me to?”

“Yes, it will be a pleasing contrast to your black hair, dark eyes, and dark complexion,” returned Miss Sophy, ironically.

“Oh, dear, I forgot!” ejaculated Alphonse, crestfallen.

“Yes,” resumed Miss Sophy, with an aspect of wisdom; “that is because of your head being so turned by the flatteries of the hair-brained fops and coxcombs you encourage, with so little sense of the decorum and modest reserve becoming a young lady; hoping to fall in for a fine fortune by your uncle, whose heiress it is thought you may be, as he is old, sickly, and childless, they all strive who shall be the lucky man. If you were wise as Ruth, Rachael, Rebecca, or any of those good women of whom the Bible tells us, you would cashier all those silly creatures, most of all Guildford Colandisk, and give your hand to that truly worthy man, Nathaniel Lamb.”

“Aunty, if you love me,” cried Alphonse, throwing up her hands in horror, “don’t speak of it again: an old daddy-long-legs who ran away from one wife, and had another run away from him;—oh, aunty!”

“My dear, don’t set yourself up to be a lecturer of your betters, and a Pharisee who knows and keeps the law

better than others," angrily vociferated Miss Sophy, with eyes deepening to a shade of verjuice green. "Our friend, the Rev. Nathaniel Lamb, is a vessel of election, worthy of all honour. His first wife was a person who was in every respect a stumbling-block to salvation, a person with incompatible temper with whom he could not live happily; his next—it only proves the guileless innocence of the young man's unsuspecting nature—she trepanned him into a union, and then deserted him, spreading everywhere, to justify herself, odious calumnies against his character; but in each case he has legally and correctly taken out a divorce, so that he is free as air to suit himself again. He made us the confidantes of his troubles, for which he honestly condemns his own folly; paid us and you the high compliment of saying he was sure you would be just the person to make him happy again, and that if you would accept his offer he would settle upon you six hundred a year; and you know how liberal he has been to us in presents, and offered to be to you, but that like a spoiled child, you sulked and rejected them, wounding, I must say, without remorse, his feelings, and reserving all your sympathy for beggars, and your smiles for fellows like Colandisk and O'Driscoll, and Lord knows who else, who live from hand to mouth, and could neither maintain you in affluence nor respectability. What folly! But sorry I am to say it, Alphonse, you take entirely after your father and nothing after our side—that is, your mother's side of the house."

"But mamma, I have heard you say, was not at all like you, aunt, being only a half-sister, and your father's second wife, whom he foolishly fell in love with, married when you and Aunt Fanny were grown-up girls," returned Alphonse with furtive smile, as soon as the voluble lady's rushing tide of speech, a moment subsiding, suffered her to speak:

"Exactly," replied Miss Fanny, with lofty air of displeasure; "my father's second wife was a Mac Mahon, as poor as Job, and proud as Lucifer;—a papist, too, who soon turned his weak head, and made him go with her to Mass."

"And so vain of her family!" chimed in Miss Sophy. "But we soon let her know that we thought a deal more of our own, which was every whit as good, and though, perhaps, not quite so rotten with age, we were old enough to be respected; our grandfather, a trooper in the service of William the Third, having fought under him at the Boyne, and being granted a large tract of the enemy's confiscated land, he settled in the country, and became the founder of our family, now three generations ancient, and, is alas! dying out for lack of heirs male;—but, indeed, we consider ourselves just as old, and of as much consequence as any family in the land."

To this evident fact Alphonse could not well oppose a negative; in her heart she silently believed they considered themselves vastly superior. However, as she sipped her tea, her thoughts reverted to the subject from which they had been led to digress far away, and she was beginning to muse in a fit of abstraction upon the calamities that had befallen her dear old nurse, and what could be done in the case, when the sharp voice of Miss Sophy, again falling upon her ear, and addressed to her, broke her reverie:

"Alphonse, by-the-by, I want the loan of a little money. I had a run of bad luck at cards last night, and lost a good deal, all owing to that great red-faced cook, Mrs. Damer, who, I am certain, cheated me out of honours, and more than once dealt me such wretched hands, out of spite, I could almost suppose, because I spoke my mind, as I always do, and said her big bouncing daughter would be improved by a little fining down of her figure, and a little schooling to refine her manner, which is so free and romping."

Alphonse laid down her cup with an amused look and said: "Now, surely, Aunt Sophy, you did not go hurt poor Mrs. Damer's feelings to such an extent as that?"

"Nonsense, child!—why not? She thinks a great deal too much of that girl, and lets her run riot, while the old dotard of a father lavishes upon her gold uncounted. To see the three feather beds stuffed into a carriage is enough to give one a headache, and the poor things think they'll catch a lord for her; so the mother one day gave me to understand that her Carline was sure to marry a noble-

man, that she had only to pick and choose among a lot that were dying for her. "'Tis a pity to keep them so long in suspense," I made answer. I have no doubt but her weight in gold will buy her a lord, and that her father can well afford to give. But, in my opinion, she might do as well without looking so high; for who are the Damers but low merchants?—and I wonder at Lady Moira to fill her rooms with such rubbish."

"But I think, aunt, they claim to be of the Portarlington* family" said Alphonse.

"The Portarlington family does not recognise them," said Miss Fanny, pompously; it would never answer, you know, child, for families of wealth and consequence to acknowledge all the poor relations or relatives who have lost cast by misalliance, or following business; such have no right to intrude upon the aristocracy. And who was Mrs. Damer but a Booth, a horse doctor's daughter? Suppose Damer himself to be up to the mark, which he is not, being a tea importer, and late purchaser of a fine estate!"

"How much money do you want, Aunt Sophy?" said Alphonse, standing up from the breakfast-table.

"Let me see; five pounds, I think, will do;—and for goodness' sake, will you get yourself a silk dress; I'm tired of looking at that old merino."

"Very well, aunty, I will. What colour shall I choose?"

"Your Aunt Fanny will go with you to the silk mercer's and see you get a good rich silk; and don't be taking a leaf out of the book of Ethel Courtney, and making yourself a subject of comment to the world. I wish, too, you could carry your head with a little assumption of dignity: not that I want you to have a toss in it, or give yourself the affected airs of Lady Alicia Luttrell, or Caroline Damer, or their friend, Susan Gubbins, all of whom I saw whispering, tittering, and jibing behind your back last night; and at Ethel, too, though I don't know why, for she was well dressed; but in general she is so dowdy, and to think of her presuming last summer to visit us, to come up to

* "Damer, the founder of the Portarlington family, was a Cromwellian soldier of fortune, enriched by great confiscation grants; he was also a noted usurer."—*Gilbert's "Hist. Dub."*

our drawing-room in a muslin dress : fortunately you were not at home or you would have made her quite welcome ; but we, by our formal, distant manner, soon let her see we would not tolerate such disrespect ; so she took the hint and has not come near us since. The worst of it is, her cousin, Flora Esmond, who is the very model we would have you imitate, seems to have taken umbrage at our rebuke of her cousin, and, though, waiving ceremony, we have called over and over, she never now returns our visits, and is always so reserved when we meet in society, besides declining our invitations to tea ; I cannot understand how good church-going persons can be so resentful. Are you going to-day to buy your dress ? ”

“ No, Aunt Sophy, I must go to-day to see those poor things, and what I can do for them. ”

“ You don’t mean to say you are going to lanes and alleys to see these people ? ”

“ Yes, aunt ; why not ? ”

“ Improper, my dear, most improper, and highly dangerous, ” cried both ladies in a breath. “ A young lady going by herself to Lord knows where ! ”

“ Only to Little Mary-street, aunt, where nurse has a room, ” pleaded Alphonse.

“ To garrets and cellars. No, positively you shall not. ”

“ You could let Mrs. Jolly come with me, and she would carry a parcel for me ; — or John ? ”

“ No, my dear, I’ll do no such thing ; how could you presume to ask it, to send our maid or the butler to where there is every risk of infection from fever and other diseases, incidental to the filthy dens of the poor. Mr. Lamb will be here by-and-by, and if you will give him any charity for them he will be only too happy to oblige you by taking it to the creatures, but I forbid you going on any account. ” Alphonse looked utterly disconcerted, and to cheer her Miss Fanny added :

“ And you know, my dear, it wouldn’t be wise of us to meddle, or in any way interfere in the cause of those who have made themselves amenable to justice, and whom the law has deemed it advisable to punish ; we might be judged guilty of complicity by appearing to manifest any

interest about them. See how nearly the chaplain of Lord Moira implicated himself in his foolish interposition about the creatures Lord Carhampton sentenced to chastisement; only for the patronage of Lord Moira, Mr. Berwick had himself been punished as a rebel; so be advised by your Aunt Sophy, and stay at home to-day and rest, as we shall be going to-night to the theatre. It is just half-past one," continued Miss Fanny, looking at her watch; "we have loitered so long at breakfast! Visitors, I daresay, will be soon dropping in; we had better get to the drawing-room. Go, child; and change your dress; by-the-by, Sophy, I wonder Lord and Lady Edward Fitzgerald were not at Moira House last night; be sure let's not forget to ask about it; also about those strangers whom her ladyship introduced, we must make inquiries—O'Byrne, I think, was their name;—'tis of so much importance to investigate people nowadays." With this sage remark Miss Fanny made exit.

CHAPTER V.

THE MISSES HODGENS' SCHOOL.

"Why drag again into the light of day
The errors of an age long passed away?
I answer: For the lessons that they teach,
The tolerance of opinion and of speech,
Hope, Faith, and Charity remain—these three:
And greatest of them all is Charity."

PROLOGUE TO "ENDICOTT."

THIS select seminary for young ladies, though only established a couple of years, and not exactly claiming to be of the first class of educational academies, was nevertheless in a very flourishing condition, numbering over forty boarding pupils, chiefly the daughters of attorneys, parsons, merchants, and other professional men, who, for the stipend of fifty pounds a year, exclusive of accomplishments, received the advantages of a good English and Christian education, warranted to compete with the best in the city. It was conducted by the Misses Hodgens, assisted by their mother, and an aunt. Mrs. Hodgens, originally a soft-goods shop-keeper, now the widow of a minister, who had kept a boys'

school, much upon the Squeers' model, was a large, fiery-faced woman, destitute of the smallest pretension to feminine softness, or ladylike deportment. Her small, bilious-looking eyes, were keen and searching; her countenance, aided by a red, carbuncled nose, excessively thin and pointed, harsh and forbidding; her step, as she paced along, had the weight and energy of a trooper hastening to battle, and her voice loud, strong, and emphatic as that of a captain giving orders on the quarter-deck of a transport; her department was that of superintendent and housekeeper of the establishment. She never appeared to visitors. Miss Medlicott, her sister, who had seen some seventy solar revolutions, was a spare, attenuated woman, with little cunning, China blue eyes, peering with icy glitter from their deep sockets, contracted mouth, showing through a dent in the upper lip a row of long, sharp, yellow teeth that gave a rat-like look to the feature, a pointed nose and chin that appeared smitten with an inclination, some might define as a magnetic attraction, drawing them together; her withered cheeks were puckered into wrinkles, and, being entirely devoid of hair, the neatest and whitest of crimped cambric frills bordering a mop cap and surmounting a great many bandages, set off her furrowed brow; her long, kite's claw of a hand, partly from early training, partly owing to natural conformation, might be compared to a delicate machine contrived to produce the most elaborate and exquisite needlework and embroidery; hence, Miss Tabathia Medlicott was with equal propriety judiciously appointed to initiate the pupils in the craft of stitching, hemming, felling, darning, making buttonholes and hern-boneing, sampler marking, tatting, embroidery, &c. &c. Miss Jemima Hodgins, whose summer's last rose was on the wane and showing symptoms of the sere and yellow leaf, had a medium figure inclined to *embonpoint*, large saucer eyes of no distinct colour, vague in expression, and prominently staring; a double chin and nether lip, that protruded beyond the upper one, imparting a sullen aspect to the countenance; her cheeks were large and flat, but she had a quantity of beautiful amber hair, which she wore falling in a mass of curls over her neck

and shoulders, which Venus herself might have envied. Miss Jemima's province was over the writing and arithmetic, the globes and maps. Miss Hodgens, senior, the principal with whom we are most concerned, was also of medium proportion in figure, tending rather to slight; her lineaments, too, were symmetrical, but her complexion, roughened and seamed by a virulent attack of smallpox in childhood, did not make amends by softening a physiognomy in itself hard, unpleasing, and, in all respects, a duplicate on a minor scale of the mother's; her eye, bleared by distemper, was opaque, rigid, and dull; cold, phlegmatic, inanimate, she was never out of temper, and never seen to smile, a monotonous sameness of aspect that was most wearisome and repelling, daily greeted all with whom she came into contact; she lived, as it were, by rote, and acted by system. Yet though attractive neither in person nor manner, Miss Julia Hodgens stood high for meritorious deserts in the esteem of the public, and was at once the idol and oracle of all the old maids and matrons of the city, by none of whom was she held in more repute as an example of piety, wisdom, and industry than by the Misses Warbeck Higgenboggan, who in every emergency were wont to consult her opinion to judge whether it tallied with their own, which it mostly did. Miss Hodgens' office was to catechise the classes, issue prospectuses, receive pupils, and wait upon visitors. Besides this staff there was an auxiliary supplement of daily masters for drawing and languages. Mr. D'Alemain instructed in dancing, and there were two music mistresses regularly employed. The domestic *menage* consisted of boy to open the door and give an air to the house, a white-haired, pink-eyed, tallow-cheeked youth of fifteen, with a pert housemaid and parlourmaid, all imported for their English accent and superior respectability from London, and who stipulated, along with high wages, that they should mess to themselves, and not be obligated to mix with the nasty, dirty Irish servants—of which there was but one—to wit, the cook, an elderly woman, who wore a stuff gown, check apron, white mop cap, and a yellow kerchief pinned across her bosom, and surveyed the dandy butler who grinned

at her brogues and yarn stockings, and the poor fandangoed cretins of girls that turned up their cocked noses at her fine homespun woollen cloak and hood, that she was wont to exhibit with so much comfort to herself and pride to the congregation at Mass on Sundays in Clarendon-street chapel, with an amount of disdain that fairly balanced the interest. It was to this seminary that Miles O'Byrne, upon the recommendation of a lady friend engaged to be married to a relative of his, had decided to send his sister. Shortly after his arrival from France, Hugh being otherwise engaged at the time, Miles unfortunately set out alone to negotiate transactions, introduced by one who had been a pupil herself for a short period, in taking lessons to perfect herself in some accomplishment. There was no difficulty about arranging terms, though some objections were made about peremptory stipulations by Miles to ensure for his sister the free practice of her religious duties and the discharge of the obligations imposed by her Church; but where the more genial Hugh, with conciliating tact, would have smoothed away obstructions, Miles with a high hand overruled them. Ill could the lady brook one, whom as a Catholic she looked on as an inferior, assuming a tone more of patronage than deference, dictating with condescension instead of suing as a suppliant, and in every respect combining with the courtesy of a gentleman the authority of one who considered himself a potentate, and something above an equal. It was a phenomenon strange as if her servant were to turn the tables, and deport himself as on par with his betters. So upon the conclusion of the interview the gentleman bowed himself out, and Miss Hodgens, on her way back to the schoolroom, mentally reviewed the matter, and came to the conclusion that the new pupil, whom she had not yet seen, but whose quarter's pension she held in her hand, must not be equally favoured with the others. Entering the room, she took a survey of the forms at either side, with twenty-four young ladies all in a row, shivering with blue noses and red fingers over their slates, then at the well-slacked-down fire and glistening fire-irons; standing still, she called aloud in shrill voice: "Attention!"

Instantly every slate was lowered and every eye rivetted upon the speaker, who proceeded:

"Young ladies, a new pupil is to be introduced to you to-morrow, and I have only to observe that as she is not your equal in social status, or in any way, being, in fact, I am sorry to say, a Papist, it will not be necessary for you to receive or consider her as one of yourselves. Of course you will be polite and ceremonious, but there must be no amalgamation, no understanding between you. You will indeed have to say your lessons in class, and dine and all that in concert; but there it must end. Intercourse I strictly forbid. Do you comprehend?"

An affirmative being given to the effect that they did comprehend, and Miss Hodgens having taken another survey of her pupils, who were distinguished for prim, formal manners, sly, demure faces, constrained and affected deportment, withdrew, beckoning Miss Jemima to follow, who promptly obeyed the signal, leaving a monitress in her place, under whose *regimé*, when the door was closed, there was a sudden rush to the sepulchred fire, a sudden gabble of tongues, and flitting to and fro of restless limbs long quiescent under pressure; but the only allusion made to the newcomer, who had been thus announced, was by an engaging little child of six, who put up her rosy mouth to an older pupil and said:

"Lizzy, what's a Papist?—is she a black, like Uncle Dick's Sambo, the nigger, that's coming to school to-morrow?" But time was too precious to be squandered by the briefly enfranchised Lizzy, who was doing her best to wheedle a companion for a loan of a surreptitious novel, to attend to the questioner, and Maggie Dillon remained unanswered to her own speculations. In the family sittingroom, where the elders were convened in council, Mrs. Hodgens looking over a file of bills, Miss Tabathia mending a stocking, Miss Hodgens speaking, and Miss Jemima looking on, the following colloquy was proceeding:

"I wonder you took her on such terms," Mrs. Hodgens said, having heard Miss Hodgens' narrative of the business. "I never heard of anything so insolent."

"I wouldn't have suffered her to cross the threshold

but for fear of disoblising Miss Harvey, who interested herself so in the matter," responded Miss Hodgens, in an angry tone, though in reality she was stolid as usual.

"Psha! Julia, what nonsense!" cried Miss Medlicott, petulantly, jerking the thread with which she was darning to get it through. "What about Miss Harvey, who's, I hear, going to make an old fool of herself and marry Captain Gregory Byrne, a Papist, too? I wonder, with her fine property, she wouldn't choose, if wed she needs must, someone that had a chance of heaven."

"And think what a scandal it will be, and bad example, to see a pupil of ours going to Mass, and all that sort of thing," observed Jemima, twisting a curl round her finger.

"I shouldn't so much have minded if the gentleman had been civil and not so exacting," soliloquised Miss Hodgens. "I could have overlooked and winked at a little, to decoy her along gently by example and precept from her errors; but when he laid down the law like a magistrate, I would have declined further overture, only, you see, we are indebted to Miss Harvey for some of our best pupils from the county Wexford, and who knows how she might resent it if we disoblised her?"

"Why didn't you go consult the Misses Warbeck Higgenboggan about it before you closed?" demanded Miss Tabathia.

"Where was the use? They couldn't have advised me in this case, except, perhaps, against my interest; and as for Alphonse Fitzpatrick, if she knew we had a Catholic pupil, she'd be for getting acquainted and make bad worse by her silliness."

"What about fish? I suppose it would stick in her throat to eat meat on a Friday; and where are we to get fish for her when it is so scarce and dear?" exclaimed Mrs. Hodgens, rattling her bunch of keys in a sudden burst of excitement, and looking tremendously practical and calculating.

"Perhaps she might be content with apple dumpling or jam roll?" suggested Miss Jemima, "or seakale, or omelet?"

Miss Tabathia looked over her spectacles, and said: "Fudge, my dear; if we gave those dainties, it would be holding out a premium for Popery: not a girl in the school but would be envying the Papist, and rebelling against roast beef. Give her what I daresay she's better used to—potatoes and milk."

"Yes; only there's a vulgar sound about it, and I wouldn't like it to go out of the school;—and only twelve!" soliloquised Miss Hodgens. "It is very aggravating; but I'll find a way through the difficulty." With this conclusion she left the sittingroom to return to the academy; as also did Jemima.

The following day, as appointed, Euphemia O'Byrne was conducted by a servant, Miles not being himself able to bring her, to the seminary, which Miss Hodgens construed into a further insult. So when the trunk was deposited in the hall, to be carried upstairs by the boy, and Euphemia, dressed in a new cloth pelisse of ruby colour, and gray beaver hat, nicely trimmed with ribbons to match, was ushered into the schoolroom by the parlour-maid, Amelia Buggy, she was left for some moments standing in the centre of the room, we cannot say unnoticed, for every eye was fixed upon her. Miss Hodgens surveyed her from her desk, but went on with a letter she was writing; Miss Jemima stood still over a globe at the other end of the room to stare; Miss Medlicott laid down her piece of embroidery; and Mrs. Hodgens, hearing of the new arrival, sauntered in accidentally, as it were, to have a look at her. In Euphemia there was nothing, at first sight, to distinguish her from the ordinary run of children. She was small for her age; her sun-embrowned complexion wore the rich bloom of health; her hair, black as ebony, and cut short, fell in wavy clusters upon her neck; her nose, mouth, and chin were sharply cut, and betokened a character of firmness and resolution; her brow, massive and prominent, did not appear to indicate so much of talent as of deep thoughtfulness; but in her well-set brown eye, so dark that it almost shaded into black, there was a well of light that sparkled and glowed with an animated spirit that infused an ever-varying expression of its own emotions

into every lineament, alternately reflecting upon them a gush of sunshine or eclipsing them in shadow, and rendering it not easy to decipher from a countenance ever in transition and yielding to the impression of the moment, the real character and disposition of its owner; but many hours had not elapsed, nevertheless, before the Misses Hodgens, their parent, and their aunt, who were all tolerably well-versed in the art of analysing physiological traits, obtained a pretty good insight into those of their pupil. Having folded, addressed, and sealed her letter, Miss Hodgens sat upright in her chair of dignity, and called out in her highest contralto: "Come hither, child!"

With a long, swinging step, that rebounded with elastic spring, Euphemia cleared the space between, and stood before the mistress. Her deportment could not be called forward, yet it certainly was not shy or bashful; and after giving a few moments sternly to scrutinize, and bear down the unquailing eye bent upon her, Miss Hodgens suddenly suspected that she herself was undergoing a similar process of mental investigation under the perusing gaze that so intently studied every line of her visage, every motion of her eye. Withdrawing her baffled scrutiny, and pushing aside the lank tendrils of her scanty hair, she addressed her pupil: "What's your name, child?"

"Euphemia, ma'am." The response betrayed an accent more peculiarised by brogue than that of her brothers. In speaking her native tongue, which she did with fluency, her voice was well modulated, and pleasant to the ear, but the English was yet so far a foreign language to her, that her accentuation and grammatical accuracy were wofully at variance with her facility of expressing herself intelligibly in it.

"Euphemia what?" returned Miss Hodgens, opening and shutting her mouth as if the lips collapsed with a spring.

"O'Byrne, ma'am."

"Byrne, if you please; we have no O's or Maos here."

"Very well, ma'am."

The reply was so clearly entoned, and with such ready compliance, that Miss Hodgens, taken aback, looked

up with a suddenly mollified expression, that lingered, however, in doubt at sight of the inflexible lips and mirthful eye before her.

"That's a good child," audibly murmured Miss Tabathia, viewing her from a distance; "I know she will be a docile pupil, Julia, and do whatever she's bid. Won't you, dear?"

"Yes, ma'am," responded Euphemia, turning to contemplate the old lady with attention.

"Now, see that," chuckled Miss Medlicott, drawing near and patting her cheek; "the child only wants to know and be taught what's right, and she'll be a credit to us. Are you hungry, dear?"

"No, ma'am," returned Euphemia, thawing in the sunshine and growing confidential. "Miles and Hugh made me eat a big breakfast before I came, and put lots of nice cakes and sweet things into my trunk. Will you have some?"

"No, my dear, not now; but give them to Miss Hodgens to keep for you, and she'll deal them out, according as you deserve them."

This was an arrangement that did not appear quite adapted to the understanding or satisfaction of the pupil. She grew silent, thoughtful, cloudy; and when Miss Jemima approached, and in gentle tone obligingly asked for the key of her box, the child a moment hesitated, then, with brow cleared, and eye and lip firm and smiling, she said:

"Please, ma'am, I'd rather keep them, and have a feast with them," pointing to the scholars.

The Misses Hodgens and aunt came to a standstill; they discovered the docile pupil had a will of her own, and could assert it without timidity or any apparent effort.

"Go and sit down at the end of the form there, and take off your hat," said Miss Hodgens, wishing to gain time to reflect upon the best method of proceeding with her independent-looking charge.

Euphemia set off with the same swinging trot, and took up the desired position next to Maggie Dillon, whose eyes of curiosity scanned her from head to foot, while the

three mistresses put their heads together, and passed sundry votes uncomplimentary to the object of their animadversion.

"Quite untrained and wild," observed one. "Very obstinate," remarked another. "We'll have a deal of trouble with her," bemoaned a third. "She walks as if she were treading a bog or galloping after a pony," chimed in Mrs. Hodgens; "and her accent would disgrace a Hot-tentot! What sort of people can she belong to?"

Meanwhile, little caring for the strictures of the elders, Euphemia proceeded, in a matter-of-course sort of way, to make herself at home and comfortable with her class-fellows. Waiving all unnecessary formality of introduction, she opened conversation with Maggie, by asking confidentially: "What lessons have we got to learn?"

Maggie, recollecting the injunction of the preceding day, and perceiving Miss Hodgens' eye turned in that direction, dropped her head and made no answer. Euphemia, undaunted, turned to another and older girl, and whispered:

"Aren't we allowed to spake?"

Miss Lucy Brown put her finger to her lip in token of silence, which Euphemia comprehended at once, and betook herself to play with a toy-watch Hugh had given her, and to take soundings of her *entourage*.

Mrs. Hodgens and Miss Medlicott withdrew, Miss Hodgens and Jemima resumed their occupation, and for nearly half an hour she was left undisturbed to her pastime. This state of things soon became tiresome to her restless spirit. Rising, she went boldly to the mistress, and said, in a tone rather subdued:

"Plase, ma'am, may I go and lave my pelisse and hat in my room?"

"You have no room, child; and never leave your seat without permission, or ask questions," replied Miss Hodgens, tartly. "You may go this time; but mind in future what I say. Maggie, take her to the dormitory."

Away went the pair, each eyeing the other askance, as they ascended the staircase. In the dormitory Euphemia stared at the number of beds ranged along the wall, but

said nothing. She threw her hat on that which she was shown as hers, took off her pelisse, and flung it aside with a discontented air, adjusted her blue cashmere frock, tied on a sash, unlocked her trunk to find a ribbon for her hair, took out a large paper of sugar-almonds and other confections, gave a handful to Maggie, standing inquisitively by. The child took them shyly, and commenced testing their merit, while Euphemia, her own mouth full of sugar-candy, stood to brush her hair at the glass. Presently Maggie sidled up close, looked archly into her face, and said :

"I taught you war all black,"

"What?" returned Euphemia, suspending mastication, and looking puzzled at the child.

"I taught you war all black, like Sambo," was the response.

Looking more mystified than enlightened, Euphemia bluntly answered: "What would make me black?—what put such a thought into your head?"

"Because aren't ye a Papist?" was the innocent rejoinder, delivered in perfect good faith, and with evident disposition to conciliate. "Miss Hodgens," continued the fairy, unheeding Euphemia's blank stare of wonder, "said you war a Papist, and only for that we'd have got a holiday she gives with every new pupil. Why are ye Papist, 'Phemia?—can't ye say ye won't beany more so naughty, and we'll get leave to play?"

"Get out, ye little leprechaun!—how bad you are for play!" was the retort courteous, as Euphemia, now thoroughly enlightened, but apparently *nonchalant*, looked her trunk, took a paper full of bonbons, and descended with her small *chaperone* to the schoolroom, which to the new-comers unsophisticated eyes presented quite another aspect to that which it had when she left it, but which, with quick perception, she soon ascribed to the circumstance of the two Misses Hodgens having gone to the parlour, and again, for brief space, made a monitress their *locum tenens*. Some of the girls, huddled on their knees, were warming their chilled fingers at the entombed mass of smouldering heat in the grate, others were flitting

about and coshering in pairs and groups, with eager gesture. Euphemia coolly mingled among them. Her parcel was soon espied, and not the smallest hesitation was manifested in accepting the bonbons she lavished with careless profusion and indiscriminate partiality among big and little; and great was the favour and esteem, unwittingly by herself, canvassed and won by her open-handed liberality; for Euphemia had no other motive in dispensing her store than to gratify the inclinations of a munificent nature, made happy by simply conferring pleasure or benefit upon others. At length some of the elder ones, struck with shame or remorse, cried out to the greedy juveniles clamouring for more:

"No, not another shall you get; keep some for yourself, little one—and it was well you didn't give the key to old Puss—that's what we call her—but mum's the word, you know;—it's little you'd have got of them, for Jemima has a sweet tooth, I can tell you. Have you got any story-books?"

Euphemia frankly owned she had.

"Won't you lend them to us?—what are they?—how many have you got?" were the next questions showered upon her. The response being satisfactory, she was admonished again to hide them away, as by-and-by her key would be required, to have her clothes assorted, and in brief space, notwithstanding the prohibition of Miss Hodgens against all understanding, a very cordial good-will subsisted between all parties, that for the present sheathed in myrtle the sword of creed, and defied the gospel of bigotry to mature the seed of discord in any bosom. So for the first day Euphemia progressed pretty well, had her lessons marked out, was once more admonished not to make the superstitious sign of the cross before or after grace (which dictum she obeyed in sullen silence), was ridiculed for carrying about idolatrous beads and medals, and forbidden to exhibit them, and sent at night to say her own Popish prayers by herself in the dormitory. So far so well. But the day following was Friday, and Miss Hodgens, true to her undertaking not to control her pupil's conscience, but sketching out her own programme of action, said, addressing Euphemia, just as a fine sirloin of roast beef exhaled

its savoury odour from the foot of the table, with the accompaniments of a leg of boiled mutton at the head, a meat pie at one side, and a ham at the other :

"Some of the young ladies can't abide the smell of fish, so you go down and have a herring with cook in the kitchen."

Up jumped Euphemia. No mandate could have pleased her better ; she was tired of school restraint, the enforced taciturnity of her companions, and the rigorous discipline of fool's cap, rebuke, and rod. Glad to escape for a while to any change, with utter indifference to the tempting fumes regaling her senses, she bounded off with an alacrity that caused the four mistresses to exchange surprised looks and say among themselves :

"I declare I believe she likes it ; I thought she'd have sulked and demurred to the affront. We must strike out some other plan to fix her."

Meanwhile Euphemia made her way to the lower regions. Kitty Burke, a comely, motherly woman of middle age, was busily employed tidying her kitchen, after sending up dinner. She had moved the roasting-jack into its place, wiped down the table, swept the hearth, put by the broom, and turning, saw a little girl standing at the open door and looking embarrassed and wistful. Kitty was good-natured and fond of children, so standing with her arms akimbo, and kindly surveying her with some curiosity and surprise, as she knew the pupils were never allowed to go below, she said : "Well, Missy, what do ye want, *alanna* ?"

"Are you Mrs. Cook ? I'm sent to have my dinner with you," replied Euphemia, in an apologetic tone.

Kitty's smile vanished, and unqualified wonder usurped its place, as she cried : "Your dinner with me, honey ! why, won't they let ye dine with 'em up stairs ?"

"No, Mrs. Cook ; Miss Hodgens told me to go down and have a herring with you, because the smell of fish sickens some of them."

"Bad luck to 'em !" was the energetic response, as Kitty, vigorously seizing a kettle in her huge, red fist, swung it upon the fire, and in the rapid evolution of her short, thick-set figure gave to view a pair of ankles as round

and solid as pillars of granite. "Come in, jewel, an' don't stan' in the cowld. So you're the Catholic pupil, Miss Melia, the parlour-maid towld me was comin' to-day?"

Euphemia, delighted to warm herself at the first good fire she had seen since she came, hastened to comply with the invitation, and seating herself on the oak chair Kitty wiped as if with a determination it should blush into polish, in honour of the visitor, she said, with child-like simplicity:

"Thank you, Mrs. Cook; I'm afeard I'm giving you a deal of trouble."

"Don't call me Mrs. Cook, acushla; my name's Kitty—Kitty Burke—an' I'm not ashamed to own it. An' so a herrin' is what I'm to give ye for yer dinner of a fast day; wisha, not while I can give ye somethin' betther nor that, wid respect to their ladyships, *inagh*!* Just wait a bit, darlint, an' I'll make a rakin' pot o' tea an' a butther toast, wid a nice bit o' pickled salmon that I have in the closet, unbeknownt to anyone, that the purveyor made me a compliment of wid a pot of shrimps for myself."

At this moment the pink-eyed boy, who had seen Euphemia sent to the kitchen, as he laid the dishes—and naturally perhaps considering that he might make free enough to cultivate acquaintance with a pupil whom he concluded must be very accessible, and quite legitimate company, judging by the respect paid her by the ladies—inserted his head, and presently his feet, into the kitchen. Kitty, stepping down from a stool with a clean cloth which she had taken from a shelf, spied the intruder, and without preface vociferated, in no dulcet accents, and without much concern as to grammatical accuracy or the suitable adaptation of words to English ears:

"Come, get along out o' this wid yerself, ye divarter, an' keep to yer own quarthers, barrin' ye want to have a dishcloth pinned to yer tail."

"Please, missus, don't be so unhospitable to refuse; let a fellar warm his 'ands at this here fire that would roast a

* Forsooth.

hox ;—it's dismal cold, it is," pleaded the boy, with doleful face and whine.

Kitty was obdurate ; and seizing him by the back collar of his jacket, she trundled him along, like a cask propelled by a stout porter.

"Get out, I say ; this is no place for the likes o' you that hould yer heads high whin ye've nothin' to ax for. Onhospitable ! Musha, it's more o' that yees take nor ye give, anyhow. Go up to the dhrawinroom to the leedies, can't ye"—mimicking the English accent ;—"the quality, I daresay, 'll be proud av yer company, Misther Jeemes, if ye'll be so condiscindin' as to favour 'em ; but ye ain't good enough for Kitty Burke that's come of the ould ancient stock an' won't keep connexion with inferiors.

"Cuss yer an' yer hold hancient stock, ye tyrannous hold woman ; I never seed any but a man 'ave the grip o' yer fist ; an' yer ankles an' feet, why a hass would disown 'em," indignantly retorted the discomforted James, cast forth with ignominy, while triumphant Kitty, as she banged to and bolted the door, muttered :

"An' sorry I'd be to exchange 'em with the spindle shanks of such an ass as you, avic, ne'er a lie in it." Then turning to Euphemia, whom she began to settle in her own mind must be some child whose friends, not well off in worldly means, had made interest to get her boarded at the school for little or nothing—though that surmise jarred with her knowledge of the principals—eager to unravel the mystery, and curious to make herself *au fait* in all that related to the stranger, while she made the tea and buttered the toast, she questioned her : "An' what may be the name ye go by, acushla ?"

"Euphemia O'Byrne is my name ; but I must be called only Effie Byrne here," said the little girl.

"Sorra bit o' difference it makes, *avourneen* ; it's a good name whatsomever way ye look at it. I know a Captain Byrne myself, Captain Gregory Byrne of Broomfield, in the county Wicklow ;—a gentleman to the backbone, an' as good as ye'd meet in a day's walk, and then there's Mr. Byrne of Cabinteely, whose father, shame to say, dhropped the

ould name whin he married the Englishwoman ;*—maybe yer some relation to 'em ? ”

“Cousin, but I never saw them, because my father, soon after I was born, went to France to relations there ; and I was left to nurse at home till he died ; then mother came back, but she's dead now, and there's no one left but my stepbrothers, Miles and Hugh, who put me here, and Nurse Doyle,” said Euphemia, growing more confidential every moment.

“Arrah, now thin, *dil machree*, ye see I was right enough whin I tuk ye to be what ye are, a rale born lady, and one o' the good ould blood,” enthusiastically exclaimed Kitty, flourishing the teapot. “Sit over to the table, Miss Phemia, plaze, an' might I be afther axin ye was the woman that nursed ye called Molly ? I had a cousin-german that own'd by lase a little plot o' ground, wid a cow and a pig, beyant Dunlavin ; his name was Delany, Pat Delany, an' he had a daughter Molly, an' she an' I was great friends entirely, an' was married in the one month ; but I come to live up in Dublin thin, with my man, who was a stonemason, till he died, lavin' me wid one child, to go to sarvice. But Molly's husband was a carpenter, Thady Doyle ; an' I hear she has a house full of 'em on the flure wid her ;—but never seen her since, or laid eyes on one belongin' to her.”

“Molly was nurse's name,” said Euphemia, “and Thady Doyle is her husband's name. He's a carpenter, and they live in Pat Delany's old place at Slieve Gadoe, near Dunlavin. She has two boys apprenticed to a blacksmith, and three girls, one older than me, and two younger. I was as happy as the day's long when I was with them. We went to school together, to Father Murphy's school : that's where I larned to read and write ; and of a Sunday we'd all have a dance with the neighbours on the green, and such fun going to market on fair-days, in Joe FitzSimons' dray ; and sometimes another cousin I have, that she nursed too, but older than me, Miles O'Byrne, would ride over to spend a day with us ; but

* George Byrne of Cabinteely married the aunt, not the sister, of the Marquis of Buckingham, as erroneously set down in a preceding chapter.

now, Kitty, it's all over, and I don't know will I ever see them any more," her eyes filled and she began to cry.

"Don't now, Miss 'Phemia, don't, huist, *alanna!*" exclaimed Kitty, beginning to blubber for sympathy. "In coorse, ye know, a young lady that has to go into company yet must be edicated to dance, an' play the piani, and spake languidges of all sorts;—but, my darlint, whin the schoolin's over, what's to hinder ye plazin' yerself, an' doin' what ye like yerself;—there now, dhry yer purty eyes, an' take yer tay."

Comforted by Kitty's logical view of the case, Euphemia, winding up her grief with a sob, fell to work and resumed, after awhile :

"Do you like this place, Kitty?"

"Is it the sitiuation ye mean, *alanna?* Troth, an' I don't; an' I was jist thinkin' whin ye spoke by what wondherful luck it come to pass that my own cousin's foster child should come all the ways down here, an' undher the very same roof wid myself; ooh, but it bates the world!"

"I don't like it either, Kitty. I would like the scholars well enough; but I hate the mistresses all, except the one with the wizened face."

"Ay, the ould tabbycat, Miss Medlicott;—she's a rale beauty."

"She was the only one that said a kind word to me when I came."

"I daresay; she's a fine deludherer, and carries a power of religion in her tongue;" and Kitty twisted hers with an ironical grimace.

"Her tongue!" repeated unsophisticated Euphemia, looking perplexed.

"Yis, *achorra*, in her tongue, by reason, she hasn't room for it in her heart, that's no bigger or softer nor a pippin;—but she's like a book for instruction: troth, she has the Bible at her fingers' ends, an' can spake texts like a dhilled parrot, that I once heard myself say, 'God bless King George, an' to hell wid the Pope.' Sure and sartin, it's mathron over a pinitintuary she ought to be, only she doesn't believe in repintince, or that there is any vartu in the world outside of her faction."

"But I don't think she's as cross as the others," persisted Euphemia; "they are always scolding."

"What else would ye expect from varagos like 'em, *asthore*; every bird sings accordin' to its feather: yewouldn't hear a raven warble like a thrush. But jist ye niver heed 'em, no more than ye would a dog barkin', larn your tasks, an' mind yer work, an' keep to yerself; an' lave 'em no handle to tase ye; an' if they will, as some knows how to do it, aggravate ye without rhyme or rason, jist keep it to yerself, an' offer it up, an' say a little prayer to the Blessed Mother; an' come to me the first minute ye can steal away, an' niver fear but Kitty 'll have a warm place in her heart for ye; so don't be downhearted, thinkin' as ye've no friend in the house, for I feel for ye jist as if ye wor my own; an' sure, aren't we of the one faith—an sorra bit o' me 'ud be here myself, if I could see my way out of it, *ochone*!"

"You could get a place anywhere, if you don't like this," suggested Euphemia.

Kitty shook her head. "Not so easy, *alanna*. Wasn't I six months on the shaughraun, sthriving to live wid a baby in my arms? There's such lots looking for sarvice as badly off; an' in one place I got into they said I should go to Church; an' another I got into, it was expected I'd join the night-prayers an' read the Bible; another I had to leave, for the servants was robbin' like fun, an' I feared I'd have got into trouble by 'em; and so at last, when Miss Hodgens offered me the place of cook, without wages, but the kitchen stuff, an' to lave me go to Mass on Sundays, I thought maybe it was the best thing I could do; an' my little boy I got into an orphanage, an' now he's apprentice to a purveyors in Baggot-street; so I'll jist go on, till he's out of his time and sets up for himself.—By yer lave, honey, till I see whose rappin' at the door."

"Miss Effie's to go up to her studies, and her bed's to be made to-night in the attic-room, which she's to occupy in future, as she disturbed the dormitory last night talking in her sleep," was the command issued by the mouth-piece, Amelia Buggy, with a saucy manner that, to say *the least*, ruffled Kitty's temper.

"Very well, Miss Melia," she responded, with manner as closely copied. "I'll make the young lady's room as comfortable as I can ;—an' afther all that won't be much, for it's a dingy, musty hole, not one as I'd put a child in that was used to betther, if I had my choice. There, *aroon*, go up to yer lessons, an' mind what I tould ye."

"I didn't talk in my sleep," whispered Euphemia, aside to the cook, with a look of wonder in her eyes; "I sleep too sound."

"Never mind, darlint. Go up stairs, an' keep yer eyes wide open an' yer lips fast shut among 'em."

CHAPTER VI.

THE MYSTERY OF ATTRACTION AND NON-ATTRACTION.

"Hands of invisible spirits touch the strings
Of that mysterious instrument, the soul,
And play the prelude of our fate."

LONGFELLOW.

Who shall expound it? What physiologist may, with scientific skill, analyse the inexplicable agency by which not merely natural objects, tangible and palpable, are acted upon, as when the needle is drawn to the loadstone, but that subtle influence by which the ethereal element of the human mind is magnetised by some particular agent endowed with the capacity of communicating the electric sympathy, and betimes responding, betimes negative, sometimes antithetical to its subject? Again, who shall explain the mysterious action? For in a world regulated by infinite wisdom, nothing happens by so-called accident or chance—convenient terms by which to render an abstract interpretation of events we could not foresee. Who shall explain the mysterious enigma by which individuals, whom no anticipated circumstance could have connected, are drawn together from the extremity of the globe, and from the antipodes of the social sphere to blend in harmony, or jar in discordant union, while at the same time the unseen

hand raises invisible barriers, draws an impassable line, felt, though not perceptible, between many, whose grooves of life run parallel, who meet on the same causeway, yet go their daily course, conscious of predilections, of affinities of mind, of sympathies of soul, which no spirit medium in their case amalgamating, they pursue the routine of existence, "for ever separate, yet for ever near?"

Such were a few of the reflections made by Maurice O'Driscoll, as he lounged over the breakfast-table in lodgings in Kildare-street, the day after the evening spent at Lady Moira's. Lady O'Driscoll, his mother, a nice-looking person, whose fair, soft, matronly features, blue eyes, and chestnut hair, turned up under a neat morning-cap, betokened her English birth, was sitting near him, listlessly putting together the crumbs that had fallen upon the cloth which she was waiting for the servant to remove. Traces of care and depression were evident in her countenance, yet her manner was marked by the quiet composure of good breeding, and a naturally placid temperament. Born and reared in the comfort and luxury of a well-ordered and affluent English home, in evil hour beguiled by the love-tale of a son of the Emerald Isle, whose many excellent qualities, fine person, and high spirit, captivated her youthful fancy; entering into a clandestine marriage with the interdicted Papist, being yet a minor, she forfeited a noble dower, was cast off by her family, and with her devotedly attached husband repaired to Ireland, where, proudly installed mistress of Garryoel, and queen of the family and clan, she ruled a sphere most new and uncongenial to her taste and habits—a wild, riotous, stormy sphere of sunshine, clouds, and hurricane. Hunting by day with wild associates, her liege lord left her to reign alone in the stately halls, which by night were the scene of Bacchanalian orgies, carouse, and revel. "The wild Irish!" Yes, in those days well they merited the contemptuous taunt, applied to them by friend and foe alike. But let us investigate. Since causes must produce effects, why this national transition from sobriety to intoxication—from staid propriety to reckless frenzy? The Irish chieftains of olden time dwelt in their princely castles; they hunted the wolf and red

deer, they made war and foray, they convened in public games or councils, they maintained their dignity with splendour, and their banquets were held with sumptuous magnificence; yet no unseemly, vulgar excess marred the picture or daubed it into a caricature. But six centuries of alien influx had overflowed the land; war surging upon war had swept away the old race, had cut down the chieftain patriarchs, and left the broken ruins that strewed the land, and the historic page, sole mementoes of those that were. The descendants of the grantees of Queen Elizabeth, of James I., Cromwell, and William III., who lived in uproarious hilarity amongst each other, with a frequent admixture of their own servants, uneducated, uncouth, uncultivated beings, whose instincts were all material, gross, and violent, whose natures were coarse and rough, and constitutions robust and vigorous—a generation whom a few of the humbler aborigines spared from their country's wreck, designated "half-sirs."

These were the wild Irish, half-mounted gentlemen, who wore buckskin breeches, well-greased boots, carried thong whips loaded with lead at the butt end, and rode powerful horses, whose coats had never known the application of the curry-comb or brush, and with whom some waif of better lineage, the solitary remnant of an ancestral stock, perchance had commingled to his utter deterioration, if not destruction, such as in the case of Sir Phineas O'Driscoll, who young, ardent, impulsive, deprived by the penal laws of England of the means of education, religious or secular, left at an early age master of an estate his father had preserved by an apostasy which he cursed with lip and disavowed in heart, without helm, rudder, or compass, by which to steer his course, or regulate his mind or his conduct, he plunged into a vortex of dissipation and extravagance that soon began to absorb a good inheritance. Debts accumulated, duns stormed, revels augmented, perplexities increased, and in the midst of troubles which would have driven a thinking man melancholy mad, Sir Phineas, stimulated to the highest point of exhilaration by the example of his associates, their patronage, and encouragement, was set upon as he led the tally-ho, in full cry

after the hounds and shot dead in a scuffle with bailiffs, leaving but one child, a son just come of age, to console a widowed mother, and support her by his own industry, the incumbered estate of his improvident sire having been laid claim to by some of his maternal kindred, who were not ashamed to take advantage of an unjust and iniquitous law, which by illegitimatising the son of a Papist, married by a priest to a Protestant, also disinherited him.

Lady O'Driscoll more than once had glanced at her son, who apparently immersed in thought, she conjectured was brooding sadly over their altered circumstances, and pondering some means by which to ameliorate their condition; but not so, Maurice's mental vision was rivetted upon a picture, which he was contemplating with much undemonstrative pleasure, and withal a large amount of regret. To speak plainly, Alphonse Fitzpatrick was the theme of his lucubrations: her image it was that filled his mind, and had filled it for many a day; for though it was only last night they had first met, and first exchanged speech or courtesy, he had seen her frequently before, admired her with ever increasing admiration, questioned concerning her, without gaining information, and yearned for an introduction without knowing how to obtain it. Once he had taken off his hat to her, and she smiled acknowledgment and bowed in courtesy, as he gave place at a public *fête*, when Lord Camden laid the foundation-stone of Maynooth College. A young man in clerical costume, who much resembled her, accompanied her, he well remembered, upon that occasion, and had shown subsequently much civility to himself; but nothing more had transpired till last night at Lady Moira's, when all at once, unthought of at the moment, and unexpected, his fair ideal of every grace and perfection, appearing before him in her bright, fresh young beauty, with a strange, mature-looking wisdom chastening her sparkling features, and an air of precocious reflection beaming through every gesture, communicated an electric shock to his system, and left him awkwardly nervous, blushing, and inactive, to gaze and gaze and palpitate with emotion, while gay and *insouciant*, she chatted, laughed, fluttered, and sported round him. At length,

however, fortune favoured the long-cherished aspiration of his heart: Alphonse and he were introduced, and nearer acquaintance did not unrobe the idol of its charm, but realised rather his fancy's highest conceptions of its divinity. One only kill-joy damped the wing of his ecstasy, and cast a cold, vapoury dimness over the sun of his spirit. He had noticed the attentions of Guildford Colandisk, his evident devotion to the same shrine, and also had discerned with a jealous pang that while she smiled upon him with fascinating sweetness, she appeared to evince an undisguised partiality for the more showy trip-and-go-lightly Colandisk. It was this point he was conning over and revolving when the voice of his mother, soft and low, fell upon his ear, recalling him to other theme.

"Maurice, dear, what are you thinking about? Do you intend to call on Mr. Foster to-day?"

Maurice looked up. "I believe not, mother; Foster can do nothing for me at present, beyond the promise he has pledged to procure for me the first appointment in which his interest may avail; meanwhile, I have made up my mind to accept Tom Taylor's offer of a place in his counting-office: two hundred a year is too good to throw away till I can do better."

"I think you are wise, dear," said his mother, with a smile dawning on her faded cheeks and in her mild eye. "But would you not have thought well of enlisting Lord Clonmel's interest also in your favour: you know what friends he and your poor father were?"

"Clonmel's an arrant humbug," returned her son, with kindling brow; "and had my father known him in his real character it had saved me the disagreeable, nay, painful ordeal of learning it by experience. A shallow sycophant, whose god is himself, whose ambition is his prime minister, and whose dictum promulgates the creed of mistrust in mankind, and craft and duplicity in dealing with the whole world. But what else, in sooth, could be expected of one who takes for his quintessence of excellence and model of imitation, the most confounded hypocrite and consummate knave that ever sullied the page of history, the infamous regicide, and inhuman butcher, Oliver Cromwell?"

Lady O'Driscoll was silent ; hers was not a mind gifted with high intellectual acumen ; endowed with a large portion of good common sense, and very little talent, she understood nothing of politics, possessed no qualities for intrigue or diplomacy of character ; hence, nothing being plain to her understanding but overt acts that explained themselves, all she could make of her son's invective, fulminated with so much energy against his lordship, whom she herself had ever found to be the very pink of amiable courtesy, was that he conceived him to be ungrateful for past favour, and declaimed in the warmth of disappointed feelings. So after awhile, simply observing, "It was, indeed, not good taste in a loyal subject to patronise Oliver Cromwell," she judiciously refrained from further comment, designing to call herself upon Lady Clonmel.

Presently her son again addressed her. "I hope, mother, you enjoyed yourself last night ?"

"Indeed, yes, Maurice. It was very gay."

"What agreeable persons those Miss Warbeck Higgenboggans are," resumed Maurice, really feeling what he said to be true ; for his interest in Alphonse, invested with fictitious merit all connected with her. But Lady O'Driscoll, not owning the same incentive to sympathy, elevated her eyebrows a little in surprise, and said :

"Did you find them so ? I thought them very starch-like and stiff ; but perhaps I judged hastily ; they have promised, however, to call, apologising for not having sooner done so ; and I may correct my first impression ; but I thought their niece, Miss Fitzpatrick, a nice girl."

This was the very theme Maurice had been drifting to come to. "Yes, she is beautiful !" he responded, with heightened colour tingling his cheek.

Lady O'Driscoll, not so enthusiastic, made reply : "Well, I don't think her so beautiful in an assembly of so many charming girls. I saw a great many to whom she could not be compared : for instance, there was Flora Esmond, who might rival the Venus de Medecis for perfect feature and symmetry of form ; and Ethel Courtney, with her golden hair and pearl-like brow—the very model

I would select for a Madonna;—but Alphonse Fitzpatrick is, I admit, very pretty, though in type of feature she differed from all beside.”

“That’s just it, mother; your discrimination proves your judgment,” returned Maurice, who had the most unbounded confidence in his mother’s opinion; and who had been himself vainly trying to elucidate the cause for his fancy’s selection from so many more dazzling flowers—one that certainly possessed neither the queenly lustre of the rose, the stately grace of the lily, nor the variegated display of the tulip, yet which had attracted and pleased him more than all beside. “It must be as you say, that in Alphonse’s style of loveliness so unique, Oriental, or gipsy-like, consists the secret of the attraction that so charms; moreover, there is something so piquant, so full of spiritual light and intellectual power in the expression of her countenance, with such unaffected, natural simplicity of manner that far transcends the mere chiselled lineament, or sheen of brilliant beauty, that I think we must award the palm to Miss Fitzpatrick.”

Lady O’Driscoll smiled. “Maurice, I shall begin to believe you are in love with Miss Fitzpatrick.”

“And if I were, *madre mia*, would you censure my choice?” he returned, stealing a glance to catch the expression of his mother’s countenance: it seemed shaded, and slowly and thoughtfully she made answer:

“I have not faith in love at first sight.”

“Then, mother, mine is not love at first sight. You see how confidential I am with you: not as some tell me, because I’m an open-mouthed fellow that never could hold in my tongue or keep a thing to myself, but because somehow you have the key to unlock me, in spite of myself; and I can never keep a secret from you. The fact is, Alphonse and I are old acquaintances—that is, by sight. It seemed as though fate were ever throwing her in my path, yet in no omantic or sentimental form that I could lay hold on as a pretext for introduction. The first time I saw her was at the opening of the Ringsend Docks by the Lord Lieutenant. She had dropped her

handkerchief; I picked it up and handed it to her, bowed, passed on, and thought of her no more; next time, was at the laying of the foundation-stone of Maynooth College. I perceived then she was a Catholic, and somehow curiosity led me to take more notice of her. I think she engaged my fancy at that time, but I'm not quite sure. Had I never seen her again I daresay I should have forgotten all about her; but sometime after I met her in a place you will not guess—the ward of an hospital in Jervis-street. A poor fellow, a sizar in Trinity College, in whom I took an interest, had met with an accident in Grafton-street—was run over by a waggon, had his leg broken, and was carried to the hospital. I happened to be out at the time, met the stretcher, and accompanied the sufferer. Well, to shorten the story, in the bed next to that on which he was laid, when the limb was dressed, an aged man was dying of some accident, which had necessitated the amputation of his arm; a priest was administering the last rites of his Church, a lady knelt beside him praying, oh, how fervently! Well, by-and-by I got a view of her face, pensive, tearful, calm: it was Alphonse Fitzpatrick. It needed no more to rivet my attention and engage my deepest interest. Unnoticed, I watched her till she retired with the matron; then, the patient being dead, the priest, a young man, whom I ascertained to be her brother, came to look at my patient, to inquire into his case, and to ask if he could be of any service. My blood boils even now, mother, when I recollect the ungracious response of the man, whose only excuse might be that he was irritated by pain: 'Begone, you Popish villain; how dare you intrude upon me!' I saw the young man blush, as he turned away. On the instant I rose to tender an apology, which the other as courteously accepted, saying, with a sigh and a smile: 'It is of no consequence; we are used to it.' He withdrew, and I felt my own spirit too chafed to prolong my visit. Since then I have casually met the young lady, once on the promenade in Stephen's-green, with her aunts; once in a carriage at a review in the Park; once walking alone in the square, yearning yet not daring accost her, till last night we met."

"Well, Maurice," said Lady O'Driscoll, when he had concluded, "if, my dear boy, you were so circumstanced as to be at liberty to please yourself, I have no doubt but that this young lady would justify your preference, but unfortunately you are not. You have no inherited means of independence. What Miss Fitzpatrick's fortune may be we know not, or how settled; a wealthy match is indispensable for you."

Maurice interrupted her with a sarcastic laugh: "Now, mother dear, be rational, as you always are, on every topic but that of your son; and delude yourself not with the idea that every eye seeing him such a paragon as you do, he has only to whistle an heiress and a fortune into his hands. What man would give his daughter, what girl would throw herself away upon a penniless man, who has not even a recognised right to his father's name—not through any worse cause than that of ignoring a nefarious law. No, I must be thankful for what God sends; luck may be mine."

"My dear Maurice, you must not underrate yourself," returned his mother, with triumphant gesture; "I can tell you Lady Alicia Luttrell, the partner to whom Lady Moira introduced you last evening with kind intention, is not insensible to your merit: she has a large fortune, high connexions, title, every qualification that could recommend her to your favour, and I was sorry to see you did not pay her more attention than you did."

Maurice sprung up, looking very choleric, and exclaimed, in tone of entreaty: "Mother, if I had to take a spade on my shoulder, or follow the plough for a livelihood, I would not, to be lord of a principality, marry Lady Alicia. It amazes me that you could even reconcile yourself to the idea of such a daughter-in-law."

"I admit she is not a beauty, but I'm sure she's very amiable," said Lady O'Driscoll.

"Beauty has nothing to do with it," impetuously retorted her son, "I am not one to be dazzled like a child with the mere tinsel and glitter of a toy. There is more than beauty of form and feature wanting to Lady Alicia: less critical eyes, perhaps, may not discover it. As to her

amiability I shall not question it, but merely observe she comes of a race not reputed for much, and a family to whom I would not for any consideration be allied. Pray refer to it no more."

"What, then, do you say to Miss Damer?" said Lady O'Driscoll, sighing over the castle she had built in the air.

"Pooh! a vulgar amazon, in whose alternate fits of languishing affectation and rollicking humour some might find wherewith to admire; I could never." Again Lady O'Driscoll sighed.

"Then there's Miss Gubbins."

"A female phenomenon of the biped species, destitute of heart or brains, and principally remarkable for an owlish visage, and goat-like eyes!—go on."

"How satirical you are, Maurice." Then, in tones more timid: "There's also Miss Blood just come out: you cannot deny that she's pretty?"

"One of the fifteen daughters of Blood of Enniscorthy! Yes, a lively little alligator;—but, dear mother, only think of fifteen of them, and the others all grown old enough to look unprepossessing; what a formidable lot for any man to encounter singly!" His mother laughed.

"Then, there's Miss Grier, an only child. You incorrigible cynic, have you any objection to her?"

"Yes; a pretty butterfly, too sportive and inconstant to linger long upon one flower. Some day I should see her, I fear, taking wing beyond my reach."

"Then what would you say to Flora Esmond?" cried Lady O'Driscoll, in a paroxysm of despair.

"Impracticable! Who ever heard of goddesses condescending to mortals? No, no; leave her upon her Olympic heights, subsisting on nectar and ambrosia in amaranthine bowers. She is not to be thought of; and, though I admire her excessively, as all must, I am not sensible of any warmer sentiment that would stimulate me to the mad emprise of competing for her favour with Carhampton, Mount-Norris, Gillespie, and a bevy of adorers, and drawing upon my head the lightning of her haughty brother's wrath, who hopes to see her queening it in high places; and as for Ethel Courtney, she has not

the name of much money. So adieu, my dear mother, *au revoir*. I'll just step over to Dame-street and conclude with Tom Taylor to render some of my time and service in return for some of his gold, while you will see the Misses Warbeck, as probably they will call to-day," continued Maurice, taking up his hat to go out, just as the servant entered to take away the breakfast things.

It was in the afternoon of the same day two ladies—whose appearance entitled them to such distinction at a period far different from those degenerate days, when seldom high-bred air, courtly grace, or elegant toilet distinguished the pretentious madame from the flippant milliner or pert housemaid, and new-made aristocrats were beginning to parade, with supercilious pomp and simpering smirk, their dishonourable titles, like phosphoric meteors amid the constellations, lighted at a higher source and shining with a purer radiance—that two ladies, passed the rubicon of immature adolescence, old enough to be steady and companionable with the aged and serious, yet sufficiently youthful to be interesting and agreeable to the more juvenile portion of society, were sitting in the saloon of their mansion in Hume-street. Flora Esmond, aged about twenty-three, arrayed in robe of ruby-coloured velvet, trimmed with swan's-down, was working at her tambour-frame; Ethel Courtney, about a year older, less richly but becomingly attired in gown of violet French merino, trimmed with satin to match, with frill and ruffles of fine lace, and devoid of other ornament than brooch and watch-chain, was embroidering a piece of silk at a small work-table near the window. Each serene brow wore a smile of calm pleasure, yet mingled with thoughtfulness, as they conversed in tranquil tone of ease, occasionally giving vent to a low musical laugh, till the door was thrown open by a footman in blue livery, and they were interrupted by the announcement of visitors. With the gliding step, and listless *nonchalance* of *haut ton*, Lady Alicia Luttrell, with a patronising "How d'ye do, dear?" floated to a low chair close to Flora Esmond, while her companions, Miss Gubbins and Miss Damer, betraying in every untrained motion the fussy *impressement*, and in every undiscip-

lined feature the eager excitement and audacity, blended with the awkward constraint of the *parvenu*, sidled to the seats indicated by Ethel, whose hand they nearly wrung off in cordial greeting, while Lady Alicia had barely extended the tips of her fingers. The dress of all the visitors was elaborate: Lady Alicia's tolerably tasteful, but that of the others was overdone to excess, and garnished by a mass of trinkets. It was amusing also to observe how closely they copied the actions of their titled friend; for, when Lady Alicia reclined gracefully, they lolled, with great assumption of ease, upon an ottoman; and, so soon as her voice broke the chain of silence, their tongues, set free, went like a mill, as loud and incessant.

"Pleasant evening at Lady Moira's," remarked Lady Alicia. "His lordship has just set off with Grattan to embark for London."

"Chawming evening," cried Miss Gubbins, vehemently. "I don't know when I enjoyed myself so;—didn't you, Carry dear? And everyone was so well-dressed!—the room looked quite showy; and you and Ethel Courtney, Miss Esmond, were not the least beautifully apparelled. But did you see Miss Fitzpatrick?"

"Yes; she looked very pretty," smiled Ethel, with covert glance at Flora Esmond, who in amused silence was putting by her work.

"Lady Moira is a very nice person, and knows how to make a party go off well," said Miss Damer.

"Yes, she's quite the lady," returned Miss Gubbins, with the decision of one who conceived herself to be an authority, and competent to pronounce an opinion; but Lady Alicia interposed, and murmured in objection:

"She's not exclusive enough; her assemblies are too promiscuous: you meet persons in her house you would not in another."

"Quite true; that's a fact," cried both Gubbins and Damer, in concert. "And it is a great want of taste to obtrude all kinds of persons without distinction upon society, and quite subversive of rank to promote such a system."

"I don't think Lady Moira does that," mildly returned

Flora Esmond. "I thought our company last night was very agreeable."

"My dear, that's not the point, else by-and-by we shall have agreeable shopkeepers and tradesmen going to the Castle," retorted Miss Gubbins with involuntary frown.

Flora and Ethel exchanged smiles, that to each other conveyed the meaning. "Who is Miss Gubbins herself?" The latter, oblivious of gold eliminated from the crucible of a vulgar iron foundry in Birmingham, continued: "Who was that Mr. Moore that sang and played, and that shabbily dressed Miss Fitzpatrick, and that conceited O'Driscoll, and those stupid O'Byrnes, that nobody seemed to care much or know much about, and lots of others beside?"

"It sometimes happens," said Flora Esmond, "that in acknowledgment and appreciation of superior talent, or other equally sufficient merit, to some are awarded by general consent the privilege of place to which they have raised themselves, and which seems to be their right; such lions are in great request as an ornament, and worth exhibiting. One of these celebrities, I believe, Mr. Moore is considered in every circle to be; Mr. O'Driscoll is a gentleman by birth, entitled to respect; so I believe, also, are Mr. Byrne of Cabinteely's relatives; and Miss Fitzpatrick is, you know, niece to the Misses Warbeck Higgenboggan."

"And a forward minx she is," exclaimed Lady Alicia, with a sudden ebullition of fire, which in one so habitually apathetic rather took Flora and Ethel by surprise. "A flirt and a coquette," continued Lady Alicia, with increasing fire; "she did her best to make herself agreeable to Maurice O'Driscoll;—I saw that."

"She seemed to make herself agreeable to everyone, I thought," laughed Ethel. "She's a merry little thing, and I don't think means anything but fun: besides, you know, it is given out that she is engaged to Guildford Colandisk; so she cannot well put two strings to her bow."

"Are you acquainted with her?" asked Miss Damer.

"No," returned Ethel, colouring slightly; "once or twice the Misses Warbeck and we exchanged visits, and then

dropped off, I don't very well know why ; but we don't care for the aunts, and to Miss Fitzpatrick we were never introduced."

"The wonder is," said Miss Gubbins, with a look of sympathy at the pouting lip and sour aspect of Lady Alicia, "that a young man like Maurice O'Driscoll, who has nothing to recommend him but his person, which is certainly very imposing, should be smitten with such a fancy as he appeared to be for the Irish girl—she's a Papist, too—when he might have paid court acceptable to others of wealth and rank. I took care to let him know, at any rate, that she was a dependent on the precarious bounty of two old oddities of aunts, and gave him a hint that any man not well off in affluence would not improve his fortune by marrying her, or advance his connection either."

Flora Esmond and Ethel looked astonished at the speaker, who, being of rather obtuse perception, and verging upon the shadowy side of forty, did not notice, and continued declaiming in favour of the young friend of eight and-twenty, whom she matronised. "You know, but that on the mother's side he has some good English blood in his veins he would have nothing at all to hold by ; and is it not strange stupidity that when a chance offered of bettering himself, he would not avail of it ; but these Irish want ambition and understanding, and have no eye to appreciate superiority in—in excellence."

"But did such a chance offer itself ?" questioned Ethel, with earnest eyes.

Miss Gubbins, warned by a wrathful glance from Lady Alicia, who did not choose just then to own herself the subject of the attraction that had magnetised her fancy to the loadstone, adroitly turned the subject by asking Miss Courtney how she had liked her partner of the previous evening.

"Pray, specify which ?" smiled Ethel ; "I had so many."

"Oh, you know very well who I mean—the great Colossus introduced by Lady Moira."

"Mr. Hugh O'Byrne?" said Ethel, with frank, unembarrassed visage. "I liked him very much."

"That's more than I could say of my partner," giggled

Miss Damer; "the autocrat did his best, I believe, to be agreeable. But he was such an autocrat, so imperiously gracious, so sublimely condescending, that I was glad to ship him off, and seize upon Jolly Guildford Colandisk, to the great vexation, I believe, of Alphonse Fitzpatrick, who had to put up with O'Drisoll instead." As she spoke, she glanced at Flora Esmond, and was surprised to see her usually neutral complexion suffused with bloom, and a mirthful smile radiating her brow. She little guessed that the peerless lady whom rich and titled suitors had vainly wooed, who had turned with cold heart and deaf ear from the addresses and blandishments of the proud and noble, who had knelt to woo her hand, yielding herself to the force of irresistible magnetism, was attracted by the haughty and repelling Miles, whose nearest advance to courtesy or suavity was a stately bow or affable smile, and who received her courteous urbanities with a calm indifference that little encouraged approach. Yet so it was, and it was the mention of his name that had sent the blood mantling to her cheek, and lingering there, till Lady Alicia asked, abruptly :

"When are you going down to Wexford?"

"Papa and mamma expect us for Easter," said Ethel Courtney."

"Will your brothers go with you?" demanded Miss Damer, addressing Flora Esmond, who answered :

"Percy, perhaps, may, but Marmion has to join his regiment;" and as she spoke, new visitors were ushered in, and changed the theme of conversation.

CHAPTER VII.

THE THEATRE.

"Suddenly, as one from sleep I started ;
For round about me all the sunny capes
Seemed peopled with the shapes
Of those whom I had known in days departed,
Apparelled in the loveliness which gleams
On faces seen in dreams."

LONGFELLOW.

It was verging to the close of a day, unusually fine for the season, and Miles O'Byrne and his brother, accompanied by a fine Newfoundland dog, set out on foot from their lodgings in Blackrock, to proceed to Dublin. As they paced easily along they conversed on subjects of exclusively personal interest, bearing neither upon politics nor referring even to their late introduction at Moira House, or subsequent visit of ceremony to the noble hostess : it was evident no magnetic spell had yet extended its influence to them, or no invisible spirit been making a busy-body of itself in their regard. As a dream the gay panorama had passed from their mind, and scarcely even a thought of any one of the bright beauties that had fluttered around them lingered upon their memory, to disturb with speculative hopes or fears the even tenor of their course. They had got as far as Merrion, when a high phaeton, in which was seated a lady, young and beautiful, beside a fair, smart, conspicuous-looking young man, who wore round his neck a green kerchief, tied in large loose bows, and held the reins of a pair of high-stepping, thoroughbred horses, came dashing towards them. With masterly hand the charioteer pulled up the flying coursers, as Miles and Hugh doffed their hats in recognition, and a second time bowed low in respectful homage to the lady, who with gracious smile and inflection of her head acknowledged the obeisance. Coming

close beside the carriage, the young men having exchanged cordial greetings, the occupant of the phaeton addressed Miles, in mild, chiding tone :

"I'm sorry you do not take interest enough in our cause to suffer us to persuade you to join the ranks. Time war," he added, with a smile, and shaking his head, "that the O'Byrnes were not dilatory to respond to the call of fatherland ; but we have fallen upon degenerate days."

Miles looked grave. Hugh, smiling, said :

"Nay, Lord Edward, you misjudge us. You must not construe our quiescence into lack of sympathy with your noble cause, but to an utter conviction of its impracticability and its hazard."

"*Eh bien, mon ami, pourquoi ?*" exclaimed Lord Edward Fitzgerald, turning impetuously to Miles. "What have we to fear? See the deplorable condition of the people; can anything be worse? The country is ripe for insurrection; our plan of action is well organised; auxiliaries are daily reinforcing us, our society is thriving to our best wishes, and we are only resting on our oars, biding our time. The moment the tricolour heaves in sight is our signal to the field."

Miles deprecatingly shook his head and replied in tone of solemnity :

"My Lord, trust me you are pursuing a mirage; you are founding a structure upon sand. The page of the past and the present is before us; we have eyes to read, let us have understanding to interpret it. No preconceived scheme of independence will ever come to maturity; no patriot's conceptions will ever result in other than abortive issue in this our country—not for lack of heart and hand among our own true men, nor for want of conduct or skill, but because we are encompassed by a network of foreign treachery: spies lurking in every corner, informers every hour rushing to the market for the price of blood. Is it a hundred and fifty or two hundred thousand armed Hessians in the field we would shun or fear to encounter? No; it is not British iron that overcomes us in battle, but British gold that undermines the ground we tread upon, British gold that purchases the ears of the adder and the

wiles of the serpent to circumvent our every step, and blight our efforts in the bud. What assurance have you at this moment, Lord Edward, that among you all, brave men and true, there crawls no loathsome reptile besliming your track? that in your bosom you are cherishing no Castle-nurtured viper, or no human anaconda that will yet involve you in coils of destruction? The land teems with the venomous breed!"

Lord Edward looked startled, like one to whom a sudden flash of lightning had revealed a gulf yawning at his feet. A cold sense of dismay for an instant chilled his heart;—then, as if angry with himself and the speaker for admitting or awaking a doubtful suggestion, he irascibly cried:

"What, then, is our doom fixed beyond that of every other nation under the sun, that we must abide in our helot chains, that for us there is no redemption, that neither patriot's arm nor warrior's blade may avail to break our thralldom, and set us free? It is monstrous! I never will assent to such belief;—what other countries have done we can do."

"Yes," said Miles, "we can, when for us shall arise some Tell, who, springing like a volcanic meteor from the overboiling crater, shall with fury terrific in its wrath, awful in its power, sudden in its impetuous course, irresistible as an avalanche of fire, shake the mountains, and rush along without pause or breath, kindling with electric fire the elements of the north, south, east, and west, till the simultaneous masses burn, self-ignited, in one glowing conflagration, devouring and consuming all opposition. Then shall the bourne of your aspirations, Lord Edward, be attained—only then."

Lord Edward Fitzgerald smiled complacently, as though he conceived the hour was at hand, and the Tell who was to sound the trumpet of Hibernian freedom was forthcoming.

"Have you seen Byrne of Cabinteely lately?" he said, addressing Hugh, who made answer with a laugh, short and dry.

"Not since we saw him at Lady Moira's. Fact is, Lord

Edward, we stand with our friends in a position rather anomalous. You reproach us that we are not patriotic enough, and our kinsman, Robert Byrne, in dread of our too patriotic principles, latterly holding aloof, does not encourage an intimacy which might, he apprehends, cause his own loyalty to be suspected; hence, to spare him the pain and alarm of our presence we have discontinued our visits to Clare Hill."

"Prudence is, they say, the better part of valour; hence we must bow to the effigy of a hero," laughed Lord Edward, taking up the reins. "Since we are not amenable to such philosophy come over this evening to Frescati, and we'll talk over affairs. I don't despair of making proselytes of you two, as we have some others of your kin, more sanguine of heart and hope."

"Thanks, Lord Edward, thanks, Lady Edward Fitzgerald," replied Miles, as Lady Edward seconded the request; "we are engaged this evening to accompany some friends to the theatre, otherwise we should have much pleasure."

"Another time, then. Adieu, *au revoir*," said Lord Edward Fitzgerald, brandishing the whip over the horses, as Miles and Hugh again bowed, and the phaeton drove on.

At Lady Moira's assembly Maurice O'Driscoll and Miles and Hugh O'Byrne, having been introduced by Hussey Burgh, were not slow to recognise in each other congenial qualities and sentiments, which very soon ripened into sincere regard, and promised the fruition of a cordial intimacy. Returning from having negotiated his business with his friend, Tom Taylor, in Dame-street, O'Driscoll met the brothers, who were on their way to the coach-office to engage seats for the ensuing week, to take themselves and their canine companion, "Bourbon," to the county Wicklow. Maurice insisted upon their returning to a five o'clock dinner, and to be introduced to his mother. Miles and Hugh, not having any particular business to occupy them, willingly consented, and as soon as they had transacted that which they had on hands, they set out for Kildare-street, where they arrived a little after four o'clock.

Upon entering the drawingroom, while Miles and Hugh made gracious salutation to Lady O'Driscoll, who rose to receive them, all the blood in the heart of Maurice tumultuously surged into his cheeks at sight of the Misses Warbeck Higgenboggan, seated like griffons, in arm-chairs at either side of his mother; but in vain his eyes roved eagerly in quest of Alphonse. The Misses Warbeck had only preceded the gentlemen by five minutes; so Lady O'Driscoll, having shaken hands very friendly with the two brothers, and motioned them to chairs, guessing with maternal instinct the thought uppermost in her son's bosom, while courteously he paid his best devoirs to the ladies, whose compliments she already received, she again addressed herself to them in inquiry for their niece, and said—

"I hope Miss Fitzpatrick is quite well, and that she was not fatigued last night; she does not look very strong." Maurice smiled gratefully at his mother, and glanced wistfully at the Misses Warbeck, the elder of whom made response:

"Thank you, Alphonse is quite well; she has an excellent constitution and is never ill;—but it is not everywhere we take her with us to visit." Maurice thought she looked significantly at him. Miss Fanny chimed in at times; she spoke with a littlestutter, as she did now, while she said:

"Whoever has the care of young persons, Lady O'Driscoll, cannot be too exact, and in our niece we have a great charge and responsibility thrown upon us; you have no idea of it."

Lady O'Driscoll smiled as she glanced at Maurice's now lowering brow, and observed:

"Sometimes young persons, indeed, are a source of solicitude to their friends; but Miss Fitzpatrick appears to be very amiable."

"We have done our best to make her what she ought to be; but she's self-willed and headstrong," responded Miss Warbeck.

Miss Fanny added: "Not but that she has good parts, Lady O'Driscoll; and when she's old enough to have more sense, I don't doubt but that she will do justice to the exemplary training she has received."

"I'm afraid, Fanny," said Miss Warbeck, "the girl's Popish principles lead us little to hope for any such improvement; for one so childish she is the most stubborn being I ever met with, and dogmatic in the assertion of her opinions and absurdities. She's quite priest-ridden."

"Madame, before you commit yourself irretrievably in the expression of your sentiments," said Maurice, coldly, "allow me to intimate that any reflections upon creed may not be acceptable to all the company." And sensible of a very rapid diminution of his esteem for the Misses Warbeck, he looked inquiringly at the O'Byrnes.

"Yes," answered Miles, haughtily, "we are subjects of the Holy See."

"I thought so," returned O'Driscoll. "Your name is synonymous with Popery and patriotism. By right, I suppose, I ought to be myself a Catholic; but my sire, nominally a Papist, practically a freethinker, surrendered me to my mother's tuition; and as I am satisfied that all she says and does is good, I'm content to walk in the path of my training."

"That's all very well in its way," remarked Miss Warbeck, glowering at Miles and Hugh with hard, uncompromising aspect; "but it behoves us to have zeal for the souls of our neighbour, and in season and out of season warn the benighted to seek the truth."

"That's very true, madame," returned Hugh, "provided we have authentic knowledge of who are benighted, and out of the pale of truth. Are you theologian enough to enter upon the discussion, and prove to our satisfaction the fallibility of Rome and the infallibility of the Church of England?"

"Come, Fanny, we have not time for controversy now," cried Miss Warbeck, grimly rising to take leave, Maurice, with inexpressible relief, promptly volunteering to show them out, after which, returning to the drawingroom, where he found his mother and friends in amicable *tête-à-tête*, he threw up his hands, exclaiming:

"Mother, you were right, they are most unprepossessing old women—excuse the expression—for my tongue rebels against the application of the term lady. What a

life that poor little niece must have with them! Is it not strange the incongruities one sometimes meets in family group?"—his speech was directed to Miles and Hugh. "Would you ever suppose, could anyone imagine, that Miss Fitzpatrick"—he was fond of pronouncing the name—"was at all related to the Misses Higgenboggan?"

Miles and Hugh only smiled.

"Did you not admire Miss Fitzpatrick?" persisted Maurice, inquisitively.

"Very much," returned Miles. "But have we not sometimes seen a flower—a violet, primrose, or daffodil—growing up, blooming, and exhaling its sweetness among stinging nettles and unsightly weeds?"

"An admirable simile!" exclaimed Maurice, delighted with his friend's eulogistic comparison.

Dinner was soon after announced. Miles gave his arm to Lady O'Driscoll, and they descended to the diningroom, where they sat down to a plain but plentiful and well-served family table. The dog, which Maurice had greatly admired, and was now asking about, had been left at the livery stable: their father had presented the mother to Queen Mary Antoinette, who had fancied it. Wine was then handed round, and in pleasant converse the evening passed over, till it was time for the guests to withdraw. Mutually pleased with each other, all parties took leave, Lady O'Driscoll and Maurice having previously engaged Miles and Hugh to accompany them to the theatre on the next command-night, and afterwards to return with them to supper.

Upon the appointed night the theatre in Smock Alley, then the rival of Crow-street, presented a brilliant spectacle. The interior of the house was divided into pit, boxes, and galleries; the seats were covered with rich scarlet and fringe, while a stuffed hand-rail, carried round, gave them the form of couches, and rendered them agreeable for attitude of repose or attention. The pilasters which supported the front of the boxes were cased with mirror, and displayed figures on a ground of gold and white; the festoons, fringed with gold, were drawn up with golden cords and tassels; the ceiling was elaborately painted. In the front was a drop-curtain, on which was depicted an azure firmament

flecked with white clouds, in the centre of which a harp shone through dazzling sunbeams. The viceregal box and dress circle were occupied by the court and a glittering galaxy of beauty and fashion interspersed by the red coats and decorations of the officers and military, and the rich costumes of nobles and gentlemen; the upper circles were filled chiefly by professional men and their families; while the pit and galleries were thronged with a motley audience, largely sprinkled with collegians, merchants, artisans, &c. &c., whose conflicting politics and opinions, loudly enunciated, amid frequent cheers, calls for Patrick's Day, exhilarating scuffles, humorous sallies, explosions of fun and laughter, with intermittent alarming ebullitions of popular ire, combined to enliven the interval *avant la scène*, and fill up the vacuum between the acts. Meanwhile, upon the gorgeous stage and scenery centred every eye, intent upon the rising of the curtain on the first act of the grand tragedy of Macbeth.

To the right of the Viceregal box, graced by his Excellency and suite, is that of the venerable and popular Earl of Charlemont, crowded with a number of his friends, next to which was Lady Moira's, overflowing with a galaxy of beauty, where pre-eminently shone the peerless forms of Flora Esmond and Ethel Courtney. Proximate to that occupied by the Chief Secretary and Lady Castlereagh, with their party, appeared the Commander-in-Chief, Lord Carhampton, surrounded by a numerous bevy of intimates, among whom were prominent Lords Aldborough, Clonmel, Kingsborough, Lady Alicia Luttrell, Sir Duff MacDonald, and Miss Gubbins, &c. On the opposite side of the stage, in a box adjacent to that occupied by Lord Clare, gloomy and morose, Claudius Beresford, unintellectual and commonplace, the Archbishop of Cashel, demure, pharisaical and sly, and Lord Norbury, facetious, heartless and grotesque, lolled at ease with the arrogant pretension and supercilious consciousness of the position to which the intuitive ability of the vulgar, backed by bold presumption and flagrant unprinciple, had raised him from the gutter, Higgins, the Sham Squire, bedizened with chains and trinkets, and environed by a choice retinue of associates, whereof in chief

were distinguished the formidable triumvirate of Majors Sirr, Swan, and Sandys, with Giffard, Heppenstal, Knox, Councillor Magan and sister, &c.—a mean, obscure crew—human tools degraded by the worst passions of human nature, and drawn from the slough of obscurity, to be farther, if possible, demoralized by the Government which had need of such instruments, to co-operate with a higher class of miscreants, to excite rebellion in the country for the purpose of effecting the Union—so hateful to the people.

Though more at home in company with his patron, Lord Carhampton, *alias* Satanides, intriguing behind the scenes with the pirouette dancers, and demoiselles of the ballet, the Sham Squire to-night was all devoted to the spectacle; in excellent spirits and good-humour he disposed himself to enjoy, admire, and criticise; in especial, his patronising attention was directed to a box occupied by the Misses Warbeck Higgenboggan, their fat lapdog, an ill-tempered pug, which snarled as often as their unceasing carresses broke its slumbers; the obsequious footman standing behind their chairs; the pretty young girl, who, fair and sweet as an opening blossom, bloomed beside them; the sad and sour-looking parson, who seemed as though, elevated by philosophy or religion, he contemplated the world and all in it through a smoked glass, that lounged between the elder ladies', evidently a favourite with them, and cast from time to time glances of disdain and ire upon that conceited, vain, and frivolous youth, Guildford Colandisk, who so manifestly evinced a partiality to its vanities, and an unseemly admiration of the young lady above mentioned, despite the evident disapprobation of the aunts, who, having accepted the accommodation of seats in his box, could at present do no more in good taste than oppose a negative remonstrance to such impropriety, which by-and-by they would more severely express their sense of, in a domestic lecture to the imprudent niece. Then lifting his gold eyeglass, the Squire ogled a party of vulgar, fine ladies, superlative among whom appeared the portly Mrs. Damer and her daughter; and then his attention was transferred to a party of three gentlemen and a lady, who, with Hussey Burgh, accompanied Mr. Foster, the Speaker

of the House of Commons, who had invited them to his box, between that of Mr. Byrne of Cabinteely, and the Misses Warbeck Higgenboggan's. Presently, after having indulged in a good survey of the late-comers, the Sham Squire dropped his glass, and observed to Major Swan, with a waggish display of wit that immensely amused his audience:

"Piffh!—piffh!—fine thing! 'Gad, 'tisen't every fellow can boast of a foster-father to bolster him up, an foster him in fortune, such as that chap O'Driscoll has got in the Speaker. His mother's a fine woman, by zooks;—but who are the trashers his cronies sitting next Hussey Burgh? I don't remember to have seen them before."

It was now Major Swan's turn to elevate his eyeglass; but before he could reply, Major Sirr made response, as he envisaged them through his spectacles:

"Ay, I know them well, very disaffected persons I hold them to be, notwithstanding their connection with some loyal folk."

"Rebels, upon my conscience!" broke in Major Sandys, with a frown; "kinsmen of the United Irishman William Byrne, on Armstrong's list, and worse, for they go by the name of O'Byrne, proclaiming at once their principle. We'll have before long, I opine, to introduce them to the notice of Norbury."

"Pish!—not you, indeed; you'd be afeard of yer life to touch such hornets," returned the Sham Squire, with gesture of disdain.

"Why?" returned Sandys, with one of equal surprise.

"Why, because there's Bob Byrne of Cabinteely, another of the lot that ye were to have noosed, at large yet, in spite of all yer manœuvres to entrap him; and will ye dare to lay a hand on these, so long as ye see them backed by such men as Hussey Burgh and Foster; no, faith, ye won't, my cock-o'-the-walk."

"What do we care for Hussey Burgh, or Foster, or the whole swarm of their partisans in the discharge of our duty?" blurted out Major Swan, indignantly. "Oh, now, let us but get a hold of 'em; some plausible pretext, you know, to go upon; as yet we have none."

"Can't ye make one?" put in Lieutenant Heppenstal placidly; "you've done so a thousand times; so ye haven't to be taught the lesson, unless ye've been taken with sudden distemper of scruples, an' lost yer memory;" and the fair, amiable visage of the boor-descended Heppenstal expanded, in a serene grin, from ear to ear.

"Not that," returned Swan, with engaging frankness, and a physiognomy that looked mystified by abstruse pondering, "when 'tis only a question of hanging a kishful of peasants, there's no more ado about it than skinning a kishful of eels—who takes heed of the clod; but," he shook his head sagaciously, "we must go systematically to work, when we deal with persons of note, else there's a confounded hue and cry of injustice got up among their influential friends; no, sir, we must act with prudence, and prove crime against them we judge of ourselves to be guilty; hence our difficulty, not but what in some cases we are empowered to *fiat* a man we suspect, yet, as I said before, if he be of much consequence, it makes such a noise as might eventually defeat our aim. By-and-by, when we swoop on the headquarters of the United Irishmen, I opine we shall have more ample scope for our zeal. Mr. Higgins, I think I have heard you say the Misses Higgenboggan were relatives of yours?"

"Cousins on the father's side, but out him when he married my mother," grinned the mendacious squire, chuckling at the ready lie suggested by his inventive wit. "I dare be sworn they're sorry enough now, the old fools. 'Pon my credit, I believe blood is thicker than water, as I feel a strange hankering to forgive them—not them, but their father, who made the bad blood when they were children—and introduce myself. Faith, in consideration of that pretty girl, I'll conquer my natural reluctance to pardon injury, and take them to my heart. And so, Major, nothing can be done to oust the Papist, Bob Byrne, out of that fine estate of Cabinteely, and cheat the kinsmen of his of the succession."

"Don't be too sure," grinned the Major; "we have found our way through more intricate jobs ere now. Bob isn't

gifted with a charmed life more than others; and as for these kinsmen of his, wait till we nab Lord Edward and his *aide-de-camp*, Bill Byrne, and maybe we won't wring out of them as much hemp as 'll make a noose for yonder hidalgos, and pull down the crest they rear so haughtily among their betters."

Meanwhile, unconscious of the animadversions and menaces of which they were the subject, and the clique whose eyes were fixed ominously upon them with no friendly interest, Miles and Hugh O'Byrne gave all their delighted attention to the gay scene around, entered freely into pleasant converse with Foster and Hussey Burgh, applied themselves to make deeper inroads into the favour of Lady O'Driscoll; and, strange to say, reciprocated merely by a cold courteous smile and bow the very marked and flattering notice of Flora Esmonde and Ethel Courtney, whose eyes seemed to beam more brightly, and whose cheeks bloomed with deeper radiance, as from their more remote positions they exchanged gracious recognition. Unheedful, too, of the more overt address with which the less reticent Caroline Damer sought to woo their attention, the eyes of the young men often turned steadily and wistfully to where Maurice O'Driscoll, contrary to his wont, sat musing and abstracted, with pensive brow and anxious eye, watching with absorbing interest every look and gesture of Alphonse Fitzpatrick, as in attitude of unconscious grace she leaned forward in low, earnest converse with Guildford Colandisk, with pleading aspect and voice, engaging his sympathy in favour of the poor woman Lanigan and her family, and by-and-by, brow expanding in sunshine, and lips wreathed with gladness, attested that her petition had not been vain, while deeper glow suffused her cheek as Colandisk in turn, with eager and impassioned look, appeared to urge in whispered tone some suit which her downcast eyes and mute tongue did not seem to repel, or even to discourage.

But the curtain rose, and every other thought for the moment suspended was merged in the opening scene. From beginning to end, to judge by the hurricane of plaudits that greeted each favourite actor, the play was a success,

and marked by an absence of the tumult and riotous outbreaks too often created by the gods—collegians in the galleries—and responded to with vigour by the demigods in the pit, to the no small annoyance as well as amusement of the occupants of the stalls and boxes, the audience retired pleased and orderly, without other confusion than the clamour of coachmen that stopped the way, the cries of orange venders, and the usual hubbub of the *canaille* swarming the narrow street. Miles and Hugh O'Byrne, Hussey Burgh, and Foster returned to supper with the O'Driscolls, the Damers pouncing upon Guildford Colan-disk, whom the Misses Higgenboggan considering they had honoured enough by accepting a loan of his box, did not invite to go home with them, carried the smiling youth, whom Caroline irreverently designated by the *soubriquet* of "Little Dandy," off in their chariot to Merrion-square. The sad-looking parson, Nathaniel Lamb, having been elected to the favour of accompanying the Misses Higgenboggan, and their niece to their residence, with a meek humility that proved his worthiness of the compliment conferred upon him, handed his patronesses into the chariot, then with the timid, beseeching glance of a mendicant craving alms, he offered the tips of his fingers to Alphonse, who stepped lightly in, with the airy grace and careless gaiety of one whose life, like that of a bird, was passed in song and sunshine upon the topmost boughs of pleasant woodlands. In vain the rebuking visages of the severe aunts in glowering silence chided the fresh, joyous expression of heart, gushing happiness dimpling every feature, tinting the cheek, and giving lustre to the eye, seeing not in these visible signs and tokens the evidence of youthful spirits, a peaceful conscience, and a guileless mind, but awful indications of guilty levity, and a worldly spirit doomed to perdition.

The Rev. Nathaniel also, who, quite sharing the same sentiments, placarded his sanctity in his physiognomy by the outward symbols of sandy hair combed smooth and sleek from off a pale, retreating forehead, behind enormous projecting ears, eyes bleared and hungry, that never dare a bold, straightforward look into any face, yet wary and

wise as that of a serpent, watched and noted all ; scraggy nose and cheeks that betrayed palpable marks of ascetic mortification that delighted the godly, who would not believe the assertion of some detractors who gave out that the parson was of penurious habits, or of others that went further and insisted he was a miser, who, preferring to hoard his gold, grudged himself the bread he eat, the voice of Nathaniel, too, by nature thin, harsh, and strong, his piety had toned down to a nervous, husky, vibrating quaver, save when in the pulpit denouncing judgment upon popish sinners, when it rebounded with elastic energy that appalled ; but it was soft and unctuous when, seated down at supper between the Misses Higginboggan, and *vis-a-vis* to laughing Alphonse, he meekly endorsed their opinion while masticating a morsel of roast duck and bread sauce, "that the world was a hot-bed of iniquity ; the beauties of creation allurements to iniquity : that genius and talent were the devices of Beelzebub to ensnare souls to ruin ; that scenic representations were diabolical mimicry ; music an evil whose measure had no limits ; sculpture a revival of heathenism ; dancing an accursed snare of the Evil One to trip the unwary into the gulf ; painting and poetry sheer absurdities and waste of time ; literature he did not quite condemn, conditioning it were restricted to pious reading, and not the vain effusions of rhapsodists, ranting about the glory of the sun and moon, the beauty of the stars, the colour of the clouds, the sky, the landscape, balmy breezes and floral gems, and all such romantic twaddle, which he never could understand or see the sense of."

"Nor I, Nathaniel," dogmatically exclaimed Miss Higginboggan. "Let me send you some lobster salad. I never read a novel, or the production of any crack-brained poet in my life," she glanced with a look of self-commendation round the table. "Fanny, I think Nathaniel would like some of that Welsh rabbit. No, I haven't the sin of misspent time to lay to my charge like some I could name"—she darted an accusing eye at Alphonse ;—"but the young people now are not like the young people of my day—obedient, docile, and modest ;—

their heads are turned astray, and filled with notions that won't help them to choose good husbands, or become proper mothers fit to have the care of a family like those our respectable grandmothers reared."

"My dear lady," drawled Parson Lamb, "you are a notable example of the truth of your remarks. Where, indeed, shall we find nowadays sense and wisdom like yours, embodied and condensed in the generality of human specimens; but though as applied to the generality of the sex, the falling off is lamentable, there are yet some"—he sighed profoundly, and cast an amorous eye at Alphonse, sipping a custard with much apparent satisfaction—"yes, some I say"—he exploded in an oratorical flourish—"some who are an honour to their gender, of whom it may be said"—unconsciously his eye leered—"blessed is the man who hath made her his wife, blessed the child who shall call her mother! And such a one is your amiable niece, Miss Alphonse."

"Yes, if she doesn't throw herself away on a fool," cried Miss Fanny, taking a pinch of snuff—old ladies and some young ones, in those days, were fond of stimulating their olfactories with the pungent. Alphonse looked up and smiled; she looked so pretty, simple, innocent, and merry, the duennas' bosoms and tempers suddenly thawed. Yielding to the inspiration of the moment, Miss Higgenboggan impressively said, with a frosty smile, meant to be coaxing, twinkling in her hard eye:

"If Alphonse would only be said by us, and marry the man we would choose for her—a good, sensible, fatherly man, who would live soberly, and lead her on the way to salvation by word and example—she would not make a bad wife, and how blessed we should be."

"Ah, surely, my dear lady, surely," returned Nathaniel, and this time his voice changed to a whine. "If Miss Alphonse would only hearken to the promptings of the Spirit of Wisdom"—meaning to look devoted, he only looked abject—"and—and —," he hesitated, stammered, laid his hand on his heart, and quavered, "if she would but only love the most devoted slave that ever sued, for grace, what a blessing, what a helpmate, how the cause of

religion and charity would prosper. Oh, dear Miss Alphonse, do, do speak: say but one word, one little sentence, and make me the happiest of men!"

Now, if the simple, engaging Alphonse had conceived or entertained for any being a feeling of dislike, which was only alloyed with that of contempt, it was for the Rev. Nathaniel Lamb, the personification, to her mind, of all that was hypocritical, mean, base, cruel, cowardly, deceitful, and treacherous, and impressed with which opinion, she had ever shunned his society, as far as lay in her power, and ever maintained towards him a most chilling reserve; but to-night, too happy to be stern, and secure, as she thought, from the consequences of the wrath of rejected overture, she was in a playful mood; so feigning to misunderstand the suitor's drift, she replied, with arch humour:

"I should be very glad to make you happy, Mr. Lamb, I should, indeed, or to help you in any charity that will benefit the poor, in whom you take so great an interest, and to whom you are such a benefactor."

Nathaniel was in ecstasies. He always admired Miss Fitzpatrick, now he thought her an angel. Such appreciation of himself, such eulogy from her dear young lips! He could scarcely contain his rapture. The aunts, too, were immensely gratified, and smiled complacently upon the maturing fruit of all their labours, developing such unlooked-for result. Nathaniel smiled obliquely, and hastened to rejoin:

"Tis even so as I expected; the sweetness of honey flows in wisdom from her lips!" His voice, as we have seen, could be flexible, so he now modulated it to a cooing murmur: "But, my precious, my dear one, it is not of the poor or of their concerns I now would speak: heaven knows, at least I have ever found them an ungrateful pack of lying knaves, greedy and sticking as leeches, and who, like the bottomless pit, would swallow up all your substance without making a single return."

"That's very true," chimed in Miss Fanny, with stuttering vehemence; "and I'll engage all your charity and benevolence makes but few converts among them."

"My dear madam," responded the parson, waxing

eloquent under the combined influence of delightful sympathy and prosperous love, "you do not know, you cannot estimate the amount of my suffering, my sacrifice, and exertion for these ingrates. Have I not been the mainspring of getting up subscriptions for flannel petticoats, and Bibles handsomely gilt and bound in morocco, to entice them to read the Word? Did I not, with my friend Watkin Waddy, contract with the house of Butcher and Gammon for an unlimited supply of sheeps' heads and hairy bacon to feed the aged and the sickly; and did I not even expend some of the funds placed in my hands by the charitable in bribes of shillings and half-crowns to lure the wretches to church on the Sabbath;—all in vain? A few humbuggers, indeed, dropped in and off, but the mass stuck to their beggarly priest; and it would bring the tears to your eyes to see the chapels thronged to suffocation and the house of the Lord desolate and empty. But I've turned over a new leaf"—and the parson became sublime and severe:—"when the paupers come now to me for alms I tell them I give none except on Friday. That, you see, my dear madam, is a masterstroke of policy; for on that day I have a table in an outhouse laid out with soup and meat, and them that won't partake of the viands go away fasting; besides, it gives me an opportunity to preach the Word. Yes, it is an admirable plan."

"Admirable!" re-echoed Miss Warbeck Higgenboggan, eyeing Alphonse askance, to see what impression such display of zeal and piety made upon her. "Do you win many to Christ by that plan?"

"Not as yet," sighed the parson. "A few just come to nibble the bait, and they are not exactly the class we want, being mostly drunken vagrants and bad characters, who infest the streets, and would go to the devil himself for a sop;—but the decent poor hold aloof. But patience, patience is my motto," and he turned with beguiling smile to Alphonse, and added, in his most insinuating accents: "But when I shall have a helpmate in this dear young lady——"

Alphonse tossed her head with a saucy smile. "You

forget, Mr. Lamb, I am myself a Catholic, so I could be of no use to you."

"Tush, tush, my dear child!" responded the suitor, with the good-natured tone and manner of an indulgent father humouring a wayward offspring. "You are a Catholic in name, 'tis true; but do I not know the principles that have been instilled by your exemplary preceptors, these charming ladies, your aunts?—and any little shortcomings, any little defect they may have overlooked, trust me, whose office it is to teach and guide, to amend and set right in you. Suffer me, sweet girl, to salute this fair hand." He extended an immense bony fist; but Alphonse, feeling that the fun had gone far enough, retreated a pace or two, and with eyes downcast, and visage rather abashed, yet resolute, she said, in accents half-shy, half-bold:

"I'm sorry for your disappointment, Mr. Lamb, but—but I can't be your wife."—She glanced furtively at her aunts.—"I'm engaged to—to Mr. Colandisk," she exclaimed, with desperate resolution to face the worst, and have it over: nor did she calculate amiss the effect of her *denouement*.

For an instant all stood petrified and spell-bound; then Miss Higgenboggan, recovering breath and self-command, exclaimed austere, as sternly she envisaged the culprit:

"Engaged to Colandisk!"

"Engaged to Colandisk!" reiterated Miss Fanny, with gesture of awe.

"Without consulting us!" soliloquised Miss Higgenboggan.

"Without consulting us!" reverberated Miss Fanny, chattering with emotion.

"When, may I ask, did you commit this unparalleled act of disobedience and wickedness?" demanded Miss Higgenboggan, now "mistress of herself, though China fall," and glaring upon the offender with pretty much the aspect and effect of a bitter north-east wind upon a shrinking hot-house plant.

Alphonse hesitated, stammered, blushed: she had expected some such scene, and had been arming herself with fortitude to bear the brunt; yet now, somehow, her

nerve and spirit seemed to forsake her, her lip quivered, her voice trembled, a tear dimmed her eye, and almost with a sob she answered :

"To-night, aunt, at the theatre——"

"There, madam ! Did I not say," vociferated Parson Lamb, lifting his voice in the pause that ensued, and looking daggers at each one, "that the theatre is the devil's own workshop."

But Alphonse's voice rose, interrupting him, as with passionate appeal she drew near to her aunts, and said, caressingly : "Aunt Sophy, don't be angry ; Aunt Fanny, do say a word for me. You know I always liked Guildford Colandisk, and said if he asked me I would marry him ; and you know you have nothing to object against him, in reality : he has a little independence, is a nice young man, moves in the best society, and is of respectable family. I have not disgraced myself or you by my choice, you cannot say I have, aunty."

"Oh, no, of course not !" sneered Miss Higgenboggan. "If you be content with the miserable income you term independence, of the ape with whom you have fallen in love, and choose to starve with him, we have nothing to object against his respectability of family—that's your own affair."

"And let me tell you, my dear girl," cried Parson Lamb, who now considered it incumbent upon him to interfere in the business, and if possible reclaim this exceedingly injudicious young person to better thoughts, by a piece of his mind bestowed upon her, with a few salutary maxims, "let me tell you, respectability alone, not based upon ingredient of substance, won't boil the pot ; there is not a man living who has a greater scorn or contempt than I of those baubles called titles, and what the world, forsooth, prizes under the name of good family, high birth, ancient pedigree, and such bombast. Show me, I say"—his voice waxed vigorous—"the man who has boxed his way up in the world, from the gutter to the top of the hill—that's the man to be proud of, to boast of, not your pampered puppies, swaddled in fine linen, strutting in pumps, and living upon the labour of them that toiled

and spun before them. Look, for example, at my friend Higgins, vulgarly called the Sham Squire by feather-headed young coxcombs of the aristocracy: there's a man of worth, there's a man that has raised himself from the condition of a barefooted potboy and shoeblack on the streets to sit in his own chariot, and take his place like a prince among the highest in the land. There's merit; there's a subject to honour! Look, again, to others of my bosom friends, whom I am proud to own—Swan, Sirr, Magan, Gifford, Sandys, Heppenstal, and others, all self-made men. Wasn't I myself a Bluecoat boy, the son of a peddler from Dundee in Scotland, who, when my mother went off with a sailor and left him, listed in the army, and left me a legacy to his sister, who, settling with her husband in Dublin, got me into the Bluecoat Hospital? Yes, I'm proud to own it, ma'am, I've ploughed my own way up, and am not ashamed of my history," he added, now declaiming more noisily, as through the fumes of the wine, of which he had imbibed rather freely, he had a hazy perception that the biography of himself, hitherto studiously avoided, but which now, in the gushing fulness of his bosom, candidly disclosed, seemed rather to disconcert than delight his patronesses; then, anxious to lead the subject to another channel, and tone down his views to a compromise, more softly he wheezed, with husky tremor: "Yet far be it from me to take honour to myself for retrieving the accidents of life and vicissitudes of fortune, that humbled my family pride; for we were of ancient Scoto-English blood; and I have good connexions on my aunt's husband's side here in Dublin, whom I could not, without sin and shame, disparage—I mean those excellent, estimable ladies, the Misses Hodgens, my cousins, and Miss Medlicott, that good soul through whom I first had the unutterable happiness of making acquaintance with the Misses Warbeck Higgenboggan, whose undeserved favour I count as the chiefest blessing of all I enjoy, and through whose kind mediation I shall not yet despair of winning their fair niece's hand." With a graceful bow to the ladies he wound up his peroration, and quaffing off the remainder of a glass of claret, rose to depart.

The Misses Higgenboggan, whose intellectual and mental capacities, not of the very highest or most comprehensive order, were, between the disclosure of Alphonse and the talk of the parson, jumbled up into a chaos of bewilderment, which baffled their most lucid powers to extricate them from a condition they described as addled, suffered their *protégé* to depart without response or comment; and as Alphonse speedily slipped away to her room, after his departure, the two sat together, at opposite ends of the rug, blinking and pondering, wise as the birds of Minerva, each waiting for the intelligence of the other to shine out, and cast light upon her own thought, which was, that perhaps, after all, as it couldn't be helped, Guildford Colandisk might not be so bad a match, if there were only more money in question; but, then, the assurance of that impudent minx to presume to think of providing for herself and bestowing her hand without their consent! Such a piece of effrontery was not to be borne, and good care they would take to make her feel that she was not free to act with independence such as that. "Gracious! such a chit of a bold thing they never could have believed her!"

CHAPTER VIII.

THE "BEAUX WALK," STEPHEN'S-GREEN.

"We cannot find, howe'er we strive,
The meaning of our lot,
Amid a spirit world we live,
Although we know it not;
And spirits round about us move,
Stirring our hearts to hate and love."

THE period of '98 panoramas in vivid hue the scenic glory of the sunset of Ireland's independent nationality, and inaugurates the dethronement of that imperial majesty which had been so lately proclaimed by the herald voice of Grattan, and acknowledged by the combined assent and action of the monarch and the senate of Great

Britain. What though red life-drops were falling in plenteous showers, deluging remote localities--Dublin, the ancient hold of Dane and Norman, the camp of foreign factions, the city of vicissitude, now a viceregal fortress, again the tenalia of a regioide democracy, anon the sanctuary of a king, and again the monopoly of a usurper; Dublin, the old Eblana of Ptolemy, shone resplendent in the full blaze of the ephemeral splendour that was hers when all the genius, nobility, wealth, and intellectual power of the land, its cultured grace and mighty mind, concentrated in the focus of native parliament, diffused above, below, around, on every side, through its length and breadth, those fervid corruscations, those beams of brilliant light, whose warmth imparted the glow, the sparkle, the vitality of being, into every once languid pulse of the country's lacerated heart, strengthening it with a new-born energy to labour, stimulating its nerveless pinions with recreated hope to soar, and imparting motive for industry long discouraged, by supplanting the penalty of prohibition with the guerdon of reward. What though, to still the tocsin of alarm, sounded by the trumpet-pealing tongues of Grattan, Charlemont, Bushe, Plunkett, O'Neill, Hussey Burgh, and countless high-souled patriots--an alien faction, whose instincts, from the fountain-head, sordid, base, mercenary, unennobled by one chivalrous sentiment, indifferent to a prestige of fame, and ancestral honour in which they could claim no part--lent themselves to the design and service of a jealous alien Government, and set themselves up to auction, bartering independence for gold? What though the prostitutes, strenuous to achieve their self-degradation, set every engine to work, employed spirits of lampoon and libel, ruffianly humorist, and vulgar and impudent buffoon; engaged the vile traducer and bribed the public journalist to overbear, intimidate, impugn, or sneer down all the combined spirit, talent, wit, and argument of the phalanx of patriotism arrayed against them; and, failing to pierce with their porcupine quills the panoply of giants, now numbered with the mighty of old, and coerce or beguile them into the surrender of their high trust and their manhood's crown of freedom, had invoked

to their aid a reinforcement of 137,000 troops, to wring by brute force, from noble hands, that which they would not yield to bribe? What though preliminary measures to effect the obnoxious scheme of the Union, then and now, this vast diabolical machine, we cannot individualise its components and designate it human, was in action to goad an unwilling people to insurrection, that, being conquered and butchered, they might be plundered, and that wrenched from their feeble death-grasp, which in life's vigorous tension they would have guarded as their heart's blood? What though scenes that would make demons rejoice, and angels weep and shudder, were being enacted in every town and village throughout the country, never was the metropolis an arena of more gaiety and fashionable *eclat*. Nightly the halls of the senate reverberated with the Demosthenic eloquence, whose thunder, rolling along the terrestrial sphere, with lightning flashes from dark clouds gathered in accumulated fulness by elements of human passions, brewing, seething, and in fierce collision, discharging the electric current in phials of wrath, were re-echoed in various minor detonations by those of the world beneath Olympus; and full oft, in stormy uproar, mortals in multitudinous force entered into impromptu debate, and cavailed at the *fiat* promulgated by the deities above them, making the streets lively at midnight, which by day exhibited the spectacle of carriages-and-four dashing along in quick succession and endless variety, swarming with a resident aristocracy and their showy retinues. Peers, prelates, barristers, officers, castle officials, collegians, and a miscellaneous population, jostling in the crowded thoroughfares; gaily-decorated shop-windows, stately mansions besieged by pompous equipages, gorgeous dress, princely forms gracing the saloon and the promenade. Then night again made garish with the exhilarating interlude of theatres, clubs, balls, masquerades, concerts, and all that could unite to evidence the prosperity of a gay, wealthy, and aristocratic city, propped upon the foundation of an industrious, social, and well-harmonising community, and presided over by a court representing royalty, supported by *noblesse*, in whom met all the charms of high spirit, refined taste,

good breeding, courtly manner, beauty, erudition, and accomplished grace of person. Such was Dublin before the Union.

In the afternoon of one of those halcyon days which are often incidental to the early spring, the then fashionable promenade of Stephen's-green, North, called the "Beaux-walk," was the rendezvous of a fashionable concourse, leisurely walking, riding, or driving in chariots to and fro, while the band of the Dumbarton and Durham Fencibles, commanded by Colonel Skerrett, played under an awning upon the Green. Of the well-apparelled motley throng we shall take but a bird's-eye view, as they saunter and flow by in a continuous stream of variegated colours. Doubtless in every bosom there is a scroll whose history might record a simple story, an interesting novel, or touching romance. But let them pass: it is with those of our own encyclopædia we have only to be concerned; and foremost, not most attractive of our subjects, obtrudes upon our notice, arm-in-arm, linked between two chosen friends, Buck Whaley and Lord Carhampton, dressed in three-cocked hat fringed with swan's-down, a yellow vest, with pantaloons to match, a light-green body-coat with sharp tails, spangled with gilt buttons, Hessian boots with gold tassels, violet gloves, a stiff stock fastened by a diamond brooch, and cane with gold-embossed head, looms in sight our quondam bare-legged, bare-footed foundling of fortune and iniquity, the Sham Squire—Higgins. Nevertheless, his aristocratic supporters seem to be proud of their companion, alternately patron and *protégé*, as in very amicable propinquity they stroll along, ogle this one, criticise that, nod to Dudley Loftus, looking down from his lofty phaeton and six, with well-bred *sang-froid*, upon the pedestrian crowd, nudge each other with a grin, as some individual to be hailed or to be avoided heaves in sight, and so on. "Birds of a feather," says the adage, "flock together;" hence, true to the instinctive proclivities that gave rise to the observation, close in the wake of these celebrities followed three, in their way equal notorieties, who, though differing in feature, maintained a family likeness of expression that indicated them

all to be of kindred spirit—to wit, Major Sirr of Santry, with Majors Swan and Sandys, his coadjutors. Next comes the obese and ponderous form of Lord Clonmel, taking the air in a barouche: he is in declining health, yet a grin distends his mouth, as of yore, from ear to ear, appreciative of a sally of wit from the owner of some hob-nailed brogue in the crowd that had sped a barbed dart to the breast of Lord Clare, hurrying by with Claudius Beresford. And here comes Lady Castlereagh in her landau-and-six, smiling bewitchingly upon the friends whom she honoured with a recognition, in chief upon Flora Esmond and Ethel Courtney, driving slowly by on a handsomely-appointed outside jaunting-car. In a cumbersome chariot-and-four follow Mr., Mrs., and Miss Damer, all looking as pompous as a purse-proud sense of importance could make them, and superciliously viewing the Misses Warbeck Higgenboggan and Alphonse Fitzpatrik, advancing on foot, the coachman having been discharged the day before for insobriety. Grimly disdainful of the condescending, half-patronising recognition of the millionaires, the Misses Warbeck, enveloped in mantles of black silk, that swelled out like sails filled with wind, and gave them much the appearance of walking balloons, swept by; while Alphonse, fresh and bright, in pelisse of nankeen and gipsy hat trimmed with wild roses, tripped beside them; untrammelled by conventionalities of fashion, unawed by anticipated lectures on propriety, her irrepressible spirit launched out in smiles brimful of delight, and ready for fun and frolic at the shortest notice. She was happy, very happy; for though she had stood a good deal of badgering on the score of her lately disclosed imprudence, being censured, and scolded, and harassed, the stormy altercation had at length subsided in sullen calm. She had been informed, not graciously, however, that she might do as she pleased for all they cared: her aunts washed their hands out of the bad business. If it pleased her to starve with the donkey, who had also, to their face, professed his entire satisfaction with the programme of famine rations sketched out, and his willingness to submit to the conditions of partnership, same time that he largely pro-

pitiated the adverse deities, and even made some advances to their favour by the present of a speaking parrot, a China mandarin, and a ticket for the opera, what was it to them? They would not have a joint less on their table. Same moment, also—such is the instability of the human mind—there intruded upon theirs a mental comparison quite involuntary, yet somehow most pertinacious, between the imaged reminiscences of Parson Nathaniel Lamb, who haunted them day after day, surfeiting their ears with repining and doleful lamentations of the loss to their church of a precious soul, and to charity of rever-sionary wealth, which, vested in his hands, could do so much good, while so much as a bouquet of flowers never from his hand expressed acknowledgment of the un-bounded hospitality and munificent donations lavished upon him, and the open liberality of the dashing Guildford Colandisk, who, in a harum-scarum kind of way, was ever making some compliment, which, though by no means wanted or wished for, generally happened to be very acceptable and useful. So, in a quiescent kind of way, Alphonse understood that the barrier was withdrawn and the consent of her aunts implied to her engagement; hence she was very happy, and totally unconscious of the misery of which her felicity was the occasion to another. Maurice O'Driscoll, a few nights before, at the theatre, had seen enough to convince him that Guildford Colandisk was a favoured rival in the affections of the only heart he would have cared to woo, or thought worth the winning. It was a bitter disappointment, for he had till then cherished a hope that, notwithstanding all that was in his disfavour—an alienated estate and an illegitimatised name—he had also some inalienable advantages, natural and acquired, and prospects, too, that might embolden him to the enterprise of competing for the favour of one who, after all, divested of mere accidental *entourage*, was even less ostensibly well circumstanced than himself, an avowed Catholic, one of a pariah class, dependent solely upon the bounty of friends for her support and protection! What difficulty had he to apprehend, what obstruction to his suit? Ambitious he was, it is true, but happiness

was at present his pursuit, and allied to Alphonse, he felt his bliss would be complete. Hers was a spirit congenial to his own; with that bright smile gilding his hearth with sunshine, with that cheery voice filling his house with music, for that beauty to cherish with devotion and exhibit with pride, for that heart's meed of affection, what could he not do and dare? He rehearsed with rapture the old, old story of lovers from the beginning, and dreamed of ecstasy, till a nightmare, an incubus in the shape of Guildford Colandisk, came upon him and put all the fair vision to flight. Farewell henceforth every beatific speculation of which she was the object. Disconsolate, discontented, restless, he came slowly pacing along, in company with Miles and Hugh O'Byrne, who had soon divined the secret, not very deeply hidden in his bosom, and sincerely pitied the young man, and wished they could find some way to be of use to him, either to divert his mind from brooding upon subjects of regret, or to divert it to another object. Sooner than they were aware that object presented itself. Lady Alicia Luttrell, surrounded by a bevy of officers on horseback, was intently scrutinising the promenaders on the pathway, her chief attention being engaged by Alphonse Fitzpatrick. Her lip was compressed and her brow dark, as with feline vigilance she watched every movement of the young girl; her gaze became more basilisk in its expression, and her countenance bore some similitude to that of a handsome fiend, as she observed the approach of O'Driscoll, and the gay, unembarrassed greeting of the unsuspecting Alphonse as she placed her hand in that which would have retained it for ever; but at the moment Guildford Colandisk advanced, with Lord Kingsborough, and the swift interchange of intelligent smiles between him and Alphonse, eloquent with meaning, at once, while it extinguished the last tremulous spark of hope in the heart of Maurice, and shaded his brow with deeper gloom, dispelled the cloud from that of Lady Alicia, dressed her cheek with blushes, and wreathed her lip with smiles. Her swift perception had taken in all; her hated rival did not reciprocate the love of Maurice: she was in love with that egotist, Guild-

ford Colandisk; O'Driscoll was discarded. With exultation she marked his downcast mien; henceforth he should be all her own. Her interest would reinstate him in his birthright; her interest would elevate him to a position worthy of her and himself; for to her mind he was by far the most splendid-looking, attractive young man that could be met with. Yes, she loved him to distraction; woo and win him she would at any cost; she must make him sensible of her predilection without loss of time.

"Gubbins, dear," she called to her friend and companion, who was standing on the kerbstone speaking to an acquaintance, "I think I'll walk a little." Instantly Captain Esmonde, dismounting from his horse, assisted her to alight, and the next moment she had accosted Maurice, and fairly taking him captive, with a smile of triumph led him off arm-in-arm, without even an apology to the friends whose claim she had so unceremoniously ignored in deference to her own pleasure, merely accounting for her proceeding with the *nonchalant* observation:

"I'm so glad to meet you, Mr. O'Driscoll; I wanted to consult you upon a certain matter; have the goodness to accompany me. How do, Lady Barrington? Come over this evening to a game of whist. How do, Lord Norbury. Charming weather for walking." And she passed on her way with her captive, and out of sight of the party, who stood looking mutely upon their transit, till Alphonse, with a laugh, turned to Miles O'Byrne and said:

"Well, that was cool."

"In Mussulman land," smiled Hugh, "the Turks monopolise the fair sex. Here the system is reversed, and the fair sex hold us in thrall. Tell me, you little despot," he whispered, in lowered tone, as he saw Guildford Colandisk turn to converse with an officer, "how many hearts have you chained in your imperial sway?"

"I'm very moderate," she returned in tone of banter. "I ask but for dominion over one; if more offer I fear they will have to seek purchase in another market. But what ails your friend, Mr. O'Driscoll," she added, to turn the conversation; "I think he looks depressed, and not so well as usual?"

"Got a bad complaint—disease of the heart, I fear," said Miles, with grave, abstracted air.

"Poor fellow, I'm so sorry for him!" exclaimed Alphonse, in tone of unaffected surprise and sympathy. "I hope it is not incurable;—what does the doctor say?"

Even Miles' imperturbable nature, not prone to mirth or swiftly moved to laughter, was not proof against the ludicrous pathos of the young girl's countenance, and her genuine sympathy founded upon her too literal interpretation of his words; his inflexible muscles relaxed with humour, while Hugh's more spontaneous ebullitions vented themselves in a shout of merriment. Happening to sway himself round, he was recalled to a sense of decorum by the unexpected sight of Ethel Courtney and Flora Esmond, whose car had drawn near the footpath. The former, with benign aspect, was pleasantly smiling upon him; the latter, with more earnest gaze, was contemplating Miles, whose face, turned from her, was bent upon the now blushing and amused Alphonse. Hugh and Ethel, as their eyes met, mutually exchanged courteous greeting. Miles, soon as made aware of the vicinity of the ladies, rendered an obeisance, in whose very humility there was an indescribable *hauteur*, and he turned again to Alphonse; but Hugh approached the ladies, and entered into conversation, which they rather appeared to court, while the surging waves of human tide swept to and fro, and the babble, din, buzz, and chatter of speech, which no one seemed to guard, filled all the space around, and wafted from ear to ear a Babel of opinions and sentiments, and as much news, scandal-mongering, and gossip as would supply the pages of a daily journal. Presently the Misses Higgenboggan, who had been chatting with Lady O'Driscoll, came in quest of their niece, whom Guildford Colandisk had rejoined. The latter did not appear to be quite himself; he seemed unusually ruffled and annoyed. The Sham Squire came up and beckoned him aside.

"See now, Guildford—piffh, hiffh!—here they come, the old tabbycats. 'Gad, a fine opportunity! Come, man, put your best leg foremost, and introduce me to my cousins, whom I yearn to embrace."

"But, Higgins, my dear fellow," pleaded Colandisk, "how do I know what way they'll take it;—and think of all that's at stake! Dem you, can't you have patience till I'm spliced."

"Piffh, hiffh! my dear fellow, no time like now. What's the objection?—and a good introduction such as yours will clinch the business. You needn't fear I'll out you out with Polly; for I can see by every look that you are the apple of her eye."

"I'm not afraid of that;—but the fortune, you confounded mill-stone. If the old ogresses whom I had the world of trouble to tame down, and who threw cold water on it when I spoke of you before, turn on me for keeping company not to their taste, and bid me begone, see what a job 'twill be. The girl without the fortune would make a sorry kettle of fish for us; and these aunts have so much in their power to mar or make."

"There's Carry Damer that's a deal wealthier," suggested the Squire.

"A pumkin-headed dolldowsy, a nettle-tongued hobble-dehoy, that has as many nicknames for a fellow as would cram a vocabulary, and doesn't care a counter for anyone but her own fat self. No, by'r leave, Alphonse loves me, and I like the girl;—but we mustn't lose the money. Find someone else to introduce you to your cousins, and be hanged to ye. What have you done with Buck Whalley? Here's smiling Swan and holy Sirr steering towards us. Adieu, I must go."

Majors Swan and Sirr, on their way, were interrupted by Lord Norbury, waddling up and asking had they seen Lord Carhampton.

"We just met him and Buck Whaley walking with Lady Alicia Luttrell and O'Driscoll," replied Sirr, with severe eye, solemnly fixed upon the discomfited Sham Squire, hovering about Miles and Hugh O'Byrne, the former of whom was chatting with Ethel Courtney, while his brother stood lounging by. "Have you heard the news?"

"No;—what?—any more arrests?" cried Norbury, with eager, twinkling eyes, as they kept moving forward,

"There will be no peace in the country till the class who supply the insurgents be out off to a man."

"Ay, just so; we're hard at it;—but that's nothing new," cried Major Swan. "The Pomfrets are come to town."

"Pooh! that's no news; we were shaking hands with Mother Hubbert a while since. Children all grown out of the shoe; a fine brood, egad, of lads and lasses.—What's become of Toby's half-brother, Prendergast?"

"Know nothing about him. But keep your ear open, my lord; we'll have news anon that will set the ropes swinging; Cockaigne's friends have not been misemploying their time over here. Toby Pomfret is a trump; and Armstrong and Reynolds, who were with me this morning at three o'clock, have made more startling disclosures: in fact, the hounds, I expect, will in a few days be in full cry after the game."

They were near enough now for Miles O'Byrne to hear the last outspoken words. He turned, and looked them full in the face, but did not understand the allusion, and at the moment the Miss Hodgens' school of young ladies, whom she liked to exhibit on the promenade, came by.

"A fine handsome lot o' young leedies, sir," cried the Sham Squire, making a bold sally to get into conversation with Miles, who made no response, but, minutely inspecting the train as it filed along, wondered, though he felt pleased, not to see Euphemia among them. The baffled Squire looked hard at the stern, phlegmatic countenance of his *vis-a-vis*, then, time not serving to further speculation, he withdrew to join more congenial spirits, and, shortly after, the O'Byrnes, making their *conge* to Ethel Courtney and Flora Esmond, retired.

"Ethel Courtney is a nice, friendly little thing," observed Hugh to his companion, as they walked along Baggot-street; "and very pretty, don't you think?"

"Yes, she appears to be unaffected and interesting," briefly responded Miles.

"Her cousin, Miss Esmond, is very beautiful, and at first sight more attractive," added Hugh. "I was sorry you appeared so cold and distant in your manner; I think she felt it."

"I intended she should; I have no wish to ingratiate myself with that family," returned Miles, gloomily.

"Come now, come now, Miles, there's no use in it; what's done can't be undone," said Hugh, with emphasis. "Would you make the present generation responsible for the acts of the past?"

"I certainly would," sharply replied Miles; "restitution never comes too late; no lapse of time exonerates the posterity of the plunderer from doing justice to the heirs of the plundered: such is my dogma, let who will impugn it."

"I do not impugn it," said Hugh; "I, too, would have restitution;—but how? 'Tis plain we cannot nowadays marshal the clans, and set out to recover our patrimony by force of arms; hence I would compromise, and be glad to receive any equivalent, in part or whole, upon whatever terms were offered."

"Well!" rejoined Miles, with sarcasm; "go on; your speech is rather ambiguous to my understanding. I do not surmise that any such proposal is about to be made to us; the bearing of Captain Esmond and his brother towards us is not, to my notion, very contrite or penitent."

"Bother!—what a matter-of-fact fellow you are, Miles," cried Hugh, impatiently; "you can't catch at an idea that has the least colouring of imagination, that savours of the faintest romance; one would think you were a clod-headed Saxon. Well, since I must put the matter in tangible form before you, suppose Flora Esmond fell in love with you—for of course your highness would not condescend to the first move."

"You need not jibe, Hugh," returned Miles, solemnly; "I would not marry into that family. I might like Flora well enough, ay, love her, too; but did those men, her brothers, cross my path with scorn or insult, I fear me, then and there, on the spot, I would shoot them. No; it can never be; speak of it no more; let's turn to another subject. I noticed Effie was not among the Misses Hodgens' young ladies parading on the promenade; I'd like to know the reason: I hope the child's not ill. Now, as those two letters of our cousin William of Ballymanus and young Miles Byrne are imperative, urging me to go down at once to-morrow, I would ask you to put off com-

ing with me, as I shall start by the morning coach; and in the course of the day call at the school and see Effie."

"I'll do that," said Hugh, and as he spoke his name was screamed out from a carriage-and-four, dashing close by. The young men halted, the carriage drew up with prodigious clatter, and Caroline Damer, who had enviously viewed Lady Alicia Luttrell carry off the finest man on the promenade, and heard the comments, complimentary and flattering, made upon his appearance, had conceived an idea pleasing to her vanity to recruit her own list of admirers by some trophy as signal; to this end, she cast about in all directions. Joy of joys! her eye fell upon Miles and Hugh in familiar converse with Miss Esmond and Ethel Courtney; therefore they were not noteless individuals. True, though lofty in stature, and of high bearing, they had not the fair, bright, showy aspect of O'Driscoll: they were too dark, too sedate; but withal they were the next best she saw in the crowd, and perhaps there was in their mien more of grandeur than in that of O'Driscoll. Yes; they would create a sensation, and serve to stimulate the jealous pangs of inferior aspirants or tepid rivals. Anxiously she watched them.

How little people know of what eyes they are the cynosure, or of what sinister speculations they are the theme. Caroline Damer watched with beating heart till she saw them take off their hats to their acquaintances; then, while the jaunting-car moved off, and Flora Esmond turned to say to her cousin: "Oh, Ethel, Mr. Hugh O'Byrne is very agreeable, but I could as soon think of forming a friendship with his brother as falling in love with the Czar of all the Russias!" she gave the word to the coachman—and Caroline Damer's word was law with father, mother, and servants—"to drive on by Baggot-street, hence winding slowly out of the tangle of equipages that choked the thoroughfare, she came up, as we have seen, with the objects of her chase, merely responding to her father's growled murmur:

"Where the dickens are you going, girl?" And to her mother's sharper cry:

"What's it you're after now, Carry? I never saw such a girl: *can't sit quiet five minutes.*"

"Never mind; just a friend of mine I want to speak a word to. Father, you must ask them to dinner to-morrow."

"Must I, faith?—that's a good un," laconically grunted the obedient father. "Who the puck are they?"

CHAPTER IX.

SEEDS OF TROUBLE BEGIN TO SHOOT.

"Well may'st thou say that these are fearful times,
Therefore be firm, be patient!—There is strength
And a fierce instinct even in common souls
To bear up manhood with a stormy joy,
When red swords meet in lightning! but our task
Is more, and nobler!—we have to endure,
And to keep watch, and to arouse a land,
And to defend an altar."

Siege of Valencia.—HEMANS.

"MUSHA, thin!" A few weeks after she had first entertained her young guest, Kitty Burke stood before the dresser in her kitchen, holding in one hand a teacup and in the other three half-crown pieces that she had just quite unexpectedly lighted upon in restoring said cup to the normal position from which some untidy hand, not her own, had displaced it. "Musha, thin," she reiterated, with wondering eyes, speculating the coins, "if yez bean't fairy money, where did yez come from?" She paused in thought. "Sure and sartin I didn't lay yez out o' my hand, seein' it's many a long daysince I had the handlin' o' so much silver—badcess to the nagurs, they won't honestly pay me even the wages thrifle that's due to me, an' I widout' a stockin' or a shoe to my fut, barrin what I get out o' the kitchen-stuff—an' I don't think it was Miss Meelia, or the other Miss, or Mither Jeemes put it in my way, onless for—hould, I have it now—as sure as peas is peas, it's that little new schollard, Miss Phemia, has done it in her own childish way, to give me a surprise; why, thin, good-luck to ye, jewel! Ye've but to look in her face to know she's come of a high-hearted, open-handed old stock; sorra lie in't; an' my blessin' cn ye and all belongin' to ye, avourneen; an' that's more nor I have to

give to everyone as calls 'emself quality, *inagh* ! an' puts on fine gear, an' looks big, an' walks an' spakes as if they wor the lords o' the soil instead o' what they are, the robbers an' thieves o' it, the villans ! Howandiver," continued Kitty, pocketing the silver, "it's a godsend, an' I'm behoulden to ye, Missy, for the same, an' pray God an' his Blessed Mother ye may niver want goold *galore*—an' sure, poor child, if ye had yer own ye wouldn't"—she fiercely thrust the poker into the fire. "It's aisy to look fine in stolen gauds, but to my notion an honest face in rags has a purtier look about it. I must get down the pot for the round o' corned beef, and put the saddle o' mutton on the spit. See how fast the weeks come round !—to-morrow 'll be Friday again, an' o' coorse little Missy 'll be sent down to the kitchen for her dinner, not to offend thim that make a god o' the belly, wid the smell o' fish on Friday. Faix, an' I'll take care she'll have as fine a dinner, though maybe not as nourishin' a one as meat. I never knew a child that wouldn't give the preffer to sweets any day ; so I'll make a good paste to-night an' have a fine gooseberry pie an' an omelet for my little lady ; an' if they'll give me a sole or a piece of salmon I'll cook it with all my heart. But not they, indeed !—cock a Papist up with sole or salmon, while a salt herrin' can be got for a ha'penny. Where's thim carrots and parsnips gone ?" And Kitty, who never felt lonesome, between her work, her thoughts, and an inveterate habit of talking aloud to herself, bustled away in quest of the absconded carrots and parsnips.

Dinner hour the next day brought, according to Kitty's expectation, her accustomed guest. Euphemia and Kitty were now on quite familiar terms, and the former felt so much freedom of the kitchen as, without any ceremony, to proceed at once to the fire, draw over a three-legged stool, and make herself comfortable. Nevertheless, she was silent, contrary to her custom ; and when Kitty took a glance at her downcast, moody face she saw at once the child was out of temper. The cloth was nicely laid, and Kitty, seeking to turn the gloom to sunshine, knowing well by her own maternal experience how little a thing

vexes and how small a thing restores the equilibrium of the plastic juvenile spirit, cried cheerfully :

"Come, now, Missy, I hope ye've brought the sauce of a good appetite wid ye. See what I've got here, *alanna* ; there, did ye ever see such a picther as that ?"—drawing the aromatic pie from the oven. "An' see here !" uncovering the fragrant omelet. "And for dhrink, honey," with a wink of her eye, "we'll have a glass o' punch apiece afhter it. There, now, brighten up, *asthore*. What makes ye look so glum ? Sure ye ain't angry wid yer own Kitty, or vexed to have to come down to the kitchen ?"

"No, indeed, Kitty ; I doat upon you, and I like to be with you better than anyone ; but I'm going away," said Euphemia, in a quiet, dogged tone.

Kitty stared aghast. "Goin' away, my heart's pulse ! Why, ain't yer frinds contint to lave ye here ?"

"I've no friends to content, Kitty ; I'm going to please myself, and I'm only sorry for leaving you."

"Why, thin, Miss 'Phemia, is it takin' lave of yer sinses ye are ? Does the misthress know ?"

"I haven't told anyone but you ; I'm not going to endure it any longer ;" and pushing the plate from before her, Euphemia burst into a paroxysm of weeping that for a moment bewildered the amazed Kitty, who, presently recovering her self-possession, took the sobbing child in her brawny arms, half-stifled, as she pressed her to her bosom, and with tears welling up in her own eyes, said :

"There, *acushla machree*, there ; don't now ; dhry yer eyes, an' tell me all about it. Does yer brothers know ?"

"I don't mean to tell them ; I'll go away by myself ; I don't want them to know," passionately replied Euphemia, violently controlling tears of which she felt mortally ashamed, and assuming an air of bravado.

"But you'll tell me, honey, what they did to you. Why didn't you go out to walk with them yesterday, an' I watchin' to see yer purty step go by ?"

"I was in disgrace," boldly responded Euphemia, with a jerk of her head, as if the avowal had something in it to be rather proud of.

"Musha, now!—and what was you in disgrace for, my birdie?"

"I'll tell you, Kitty;" and Euphemia, who was really very hungry, having exploded the thunder-cloud and discharged the pent-up floodgates that had pressed heavy upon her heart, felt her bosom lightened, and began to look favourably upon the good things from which she had first turned with disdain.

Kitty saw the mental horizon clearing, and aided the developing calm by drawing forward and persuasively setting a piece of the omelet to her lips. "Come, now, that's my honey; just taste it. An' so ye was in disgrace, begorra!"

"The class for English history was called up yesterday," said Euphemia, speaking angrily, with her mouth very full, "and when it came to my turn to answer, Miss Hodgens asked me who succeeded Bloody Queen Mary? and I was spiteful, because they were always jibing and jeering me about the cruelty and the wickedness of Papists; so I said out, 'Bloodier Queen Elizabeth, her apostate sister.'"

"Go long; ye didn't say it!" exclaimed Kitty, raising her hands in terror and delight.

"But I did," emphatically responded Euphemia, with flushed cheek and animated eye.

"I wouldn't wonder if they killed ye. What did they say?"

"That I was a liar and a foul-tongued slanderer, and that until I unsaid what I said, and said what was in the book, 'the Virgin Elizabeth,' I should be in disgrace."

"Well, an' ye didn't?"

"No, I didn't, and won't;—but that isn't all, Kitty, or I wouldn't mind it. The girls and I would have been very good friends, at least some of them; but Miss Hodgens set them all against me. Well, I didn't much care, though I was sorry a little; but to-day they began to make game of me, and said horrid things of the priests and the Pope, and when I told them they were lies, and they knew it, I was slapped black and blue with the ratan. I didn't drop a tear then, for I wouldn't give them the satisfaction to *think they hurt me.*"

"Sure enough, honey, ye have the ugly marks on yer shoulders."

"Very well, I won't have them again. There's someone knocking at the area rails."

"Only the milkman, I darsay; let him."

"No; I heard someone call mother."

Kitty rose in haste, and went out to the area. After some moments' delay she returned with a fine handsome youth of about seventeen, who started abashed at sight of Euphemia.

"Never heed, Miss 'Phemia, he's only my son," said Kitty, whose face and manner seemed quite altered. "Go on wid yer dinner, child, and don't mind the gossoon. Tell me at onct, Ned *avic*, an' make a short story o' it. What's the bad news ye have to tell me?" and she looked probingly, wistfully into the eyes of the boy, who, standing nervously fidgetting with his cap, said in low, hesitating tones:

"I don't know what to do, mother; I'm in a fix every way, an' I thought whin I was sent o' a message I'd run down to ye an' ask ye what to do."

"Well, I can hardly tell ye, *avic*, till I know the business, so incense me into it."

"That's easy done, mother. My fellow-shopboy, Dick Booth, is every day takin' money out of the till; I guessed it long enough, but yesterday I caught him at it; so he swore that if I didn't wink at whatever he took, an' go shares with him, or let on to the master, he'd have my life."

"Thin I'll tell you what ye'll do, *avic*," returned Kitty, without a moment's debate, "ye'll go at onct to the masther, an' up an' tell him the whole story jist as ye've said it fornint me. There's nothin' like the outspoken truth, Ned honey."

Ned hesitated. "I'm afeard, mother, it won't sarve me now; the masther's a bitther Orangeman, an' he wouldn't take the book oath of a Papist. He has it agin me, too, for refusin' to go to church; he said it would be the makin' of me, for I had some good in me, if I wor only the right sort, an' he would raise my place, an' put me under a salary if I would; an' whin I told him I couldn't, he

got mighty black an' dark entirely; so I know well any lies Dick Booth, or Billy Beaky, or Sam Tickell—for they're all in the conspiracy—'ud tell him he'd believe 'an have me sent to jail, if it wor only out o' spite; an' if he warn't to do the same, or believed my story, it wouldn't help me neither, for Dick an' the others 'ud be revenged, an' do what they often threatened, swear agin me to their crony, Jemmy O'Brien, for a United Irishman, and have me sent to the Beresford riding-school to be scored."

When the youth ceased there was a pause, broken at length by his mother sitting down on the stool, swaying her body to and fro, and groaning aloud.

"Och, *uirra, uirra*, God help the poor, and thim that has no frinds to shelter 'em; *ferriergare!* What one does for the best turns out for the worst. Didn't I thank God, an' think 'twas the makin' o' ye, Ned jewel, whin I had the good-luck to get ye into the house o' Watkins & Co., an' now see the ind o' it. Och, musha, musha! what's to be done, at all at all?"

"Can't you leave it and go to another situation?" cried Euphemia, who thought herself competent to give the benefit of her counsel in the emergency, and was therefore disappointed when Kitty rejected the suggestion, saying:

"No, *alanna*; he's bound by indintures."

But Euphemia, not to be convinced by reason, to her mind so insufficient, persistently argued, while she fixed her sympathising eyes full upon the boy, who lifted his dark, pondering gaze from contemplating his shoes, to scrutinise the face before him, so full of earnest expression, energy, and vigour: "If the other 'prentices will make him rob, or tell lies on him, and if the master won't believe his word, only because he's a Papist, and send him to jail, or be revenged on him for being honest, and swear he's a United Irishman—whatever that means—I say it's no part of the indenture, Kitty; and if others didn't be just to me I wouldn't with them, and so I'd run away, I would."

This was logic, which enforced with peremptory accent and flashing glance, completely staggered Kitty, and brought her philosophy to a stand-still, while, by the

brightening smile radiating his features, it was evident it met her son's cordial approbation. Nevertheless, Kitty, who possessed a good average of common sense, without coming to any conclusion till she had thought the matter over, and been to consult the priest, now, after a preliminary silence turned to Euphemia, and said :

"Well, Missy, an' when are ye for takin' to the road yerself?"

"To-night, Kitty, if you will leave the hall-door unlocked, or the key where I may find it."

"Yes, Missy, that'll be quite handy. But what about your trunk?—you can't carry that wid ye, I suppose."

"No, Kitty; I'll just take a few things I may want, and you may have the rest," complacently returned the confiding innocent, detecting neither sarcasm nor irony in the covert smile of her humble friend.

"And where is it you'll go to, Missy honey?"

"Oh, back to Wicklow, to Nurse Doyle, of course."

"And sure you'll not walk all that way, *asthore*?"

"Oh, no, Kitty; I'll just walk easy along the coach-road till the coach comes up, and take a seat—I've got money enough."

"Very good, Missy; an' ye won't be afeard?"

"No, Kitty; afeard of what?"

"Why, of robbers in the dark."

"No, I'm too little; no one would think I'd any money, I'm sure, and if they searched me it's little they'd get."

"An' what 'ud yer brothers say, won't ye be afeard o' them to do the like?"

"I might be a little of Miles, but not much of Hugh. An' suppose they did scold or beat me, it isn't worse than to be scolded and beaten here, and I don't think they will; so, Kitty, mind you leave the hall-door unlocked, and I'll write to tell you when I get home safe."

"Sure enough, you will, *alanna*."

Struck by another thought, Euphemia looked again at the boy staring with eyes distended with wonder upon her small self, and said, firmly:

"Now, if he could come along it would be just the thing. Once in Wicklow, he would be safe out of the way of

Watkin & Co.; and when Nurse Doyle would hear he was your son she'd give him a *cead mille failthe*, Kitty, so would they all."

"Yis, my honey," said Kitty, searching her pocket and extracting some silver. "Do ye know anything about these half-crowns, Miss 'Phemia?"—Euphemia laughed, Kitty shook her head and replaced them in her pocket.—"Listen to me, *aroon*," she continued, with air and manner of benign, tender seriousness, and impressive calm, toning every syllable: "There yees are, two childhre, standin' afore me, both orphints, an' wouldn't I be worse nor the bird that laves its young to be fostered by the sand o' the desart, which is afther all its nature, if I war to forsake yees two helpless ones, an' lave yees to go yer way on the could world?—no, *avourneen*! Miss 'Phemia, listen: Yer worse off in one way than my own *omadhaun*, for ye have no mother behoulden to advise or look afther ye. Now, Missy, don't be offended whin I say as I feel all as one a mother to ye as if ye war my own *colleen*, an', wid the help o' God an' his Blessed Mother, I won't see ye do the foolishist thing a child could do—lave yer school, where ye've full an' plinty to eat an' dhrink, a warm bed to lie in, good clothes an' shelter, an' larnin', for what? Bekase a kish o' fanatics, poor ignorant crithurs in that sinse, divarts theirselves railin' at what they know nothin' about; an' it was wrong of ye, Miss 'Phemia, to raise contintion about Queen Mary or Queen Elizabeth; what's either of 'em to us, that we should bother our heads to make a conthrovary about 'em: let their own counthry settle that; an' if the bigots will deny the truth an' hould to a lie, why, let 'em. Tell me, if ye war walkin' through a field full of snakes that wor asleep, leastways lyin' quiet, wouldn't ye be wary an' step wid caution not to rouse the reptiles to hiss an' sting; so it's just the same thing;—an' as for runnin' away, I knew a young girl onot that had a bad stepmother that used to starve, an' beat, an' abuse her, while the father was at sea; well, instead o' bearin' it an' waitin' patient till he'd come home, she run away one night in a fit o' passion, an' next day the poor *colleen* was found robbed of her clothes an' dead in a boghole; an' 'twas only a week afther her father

come home wid a sight o' goold, an' fine clothes an' presents to her, for she was his only child an' the pulse o' his heart ; so ye see it doesn't do to be too hasty an' not look before one. Well, Miss Meelia, what's yer business ? ”

“ Miss Euphemia is wanted to the parlour ; her brother's come to see her,” responded the maid, taking a searching look at the boy standing by the dresser. Euphemia, crest-fallen and disconcerted, turned in silence to follow the parlour-maid upstairs, while Kitty, with the tip of her forefinger in her mouth, stood in deep cogitation by the hearth.

“ Well, Nora Creina ; what's this I hear of you ?—not good ! ” exclaimed the cheery voice of Hugh, as with outstretched arms Euphemia ran forward to embrace him. Hugh folded her in his embrace, same time saying : “ I'm afraid I should not kiss you ; what have you been doing ? Miss Hodgens tells me you are not good.” Euphemia disengaged herself, and turned to look reproachfully at that lady, seated in stiff-starched propriety on a straight-backed hair-cloth chair. Another child, by timid, abashed mien, humble and pleading, might have propitiated wrath and obtained some concession of grace, as at this moment Miss Hodgens, quite won by the suavity of Hugh, and captivated by his appearance and manner, would willingly have waived any feeling of sectarian antagonism in his regard, and manifested a disposition to be amiable and conciliatory ; but the sight of Euphemia's visage, wrathful, defiant, and pugnacious, challenging not peace but war, quite sealed up the relenting ice of her nature, and Miss Hodgens' aggravated feelings vented themselves in exclaiming :

“ Sorry, indeed, sir, I am to say it ; she is the only obstreperous pupil we have ever had in our academy.”

“ That's a very sad account, Effie,” said Hugh, kindly ; “ how grieved Miles would be to hear that. What have you done to vex your kind mistress ? ” Euphemia darted a glance of scorn at Miss Hodgens, and thought, “ If I was alone with Hugh, all I could tell him ; but she won't let me.”

“ May I promise you will improve, and be a good child ? ” said Hugh, stroking her hair. “ Miss Hodgens, I know, does not ask you to do anything against your conscience.”

"Certainly not, sir," glibly cried Miss Hodgens.

Euphemia admitted to herself this was true; but with a heart indignantly swelling, she remembered all the humiliations, chastisements, and privations insidiously inflicted upon her on that very score: the injustice, the sneers, the taunts, the low spite, and open contempt that kept her blood in a perpetual ferment, with the thousand-and-one petty vexations which she could not frame into language that would adequately portray their effect upon her feelings, save once, when she said to Kitty: 'It is as though a sore was rubbed against, and made bleed again.' But, remembering the last words of Kitty's admonition before she came upstairs, she merely looked at her brother and said nothing. Hugh for a moment seemed puzzled; then, smiling at Miss Hodgens, he said, looking at Euphemia:

"If you were a boy I could understand you better; but I confess to being no adept at analysing the caprices of ladies, especially embryo ones. I must only, little one, crave for you the indulgence and forbearing patience of your good mistresses, and caution you that Miles and I will be greatly pained at more complaints; and further, Effie, dear child, believe me, that whatever your external acquirements may be of education or accomplishments, unless you co-operate with the exertions of your preceptors in cultivating your own mind, heart, and dispositions, no one whose opinion is worth having will ever admire even beauty, divested of the charm of truthfulness, modesty, simplicity, gentleness, and a little deference of one's own will and pleasure to that of others, which is easy to acquire, if we but remember we are not created for ourselves alone, nor placed in this world exonerated from interchange of utility as well as pleasure. Tell me, now, is there anything you want or wish for before I go, and have you anything to say to Miles, who was very sorry not to have been able to come with me to see you, as he had to go down to Wicklow this morning?"

"I wish he would take me away from school, that's all; but I know he won't; so there's no use saying it, and I want nothing else," she sullenly returned.

"Then will you be a good child?" said Hugh, kissing her and putting some silver into her hand.

"Yes, if I'm not teased, and tormented, and punished every minute for nothing."

"Who teases and torments you, dear?"

"There's more of it; that may give you an idea, sir, of what I told you, and how she vents her ill-humour and discontent, till our lives are made a misery and a burden," exclaimed Miss Hodgens in appealing accents, while Hugh, looking compassionately at Euphemia, confounded at the adroitness that had turned the tables against her, and gazing bewildered at the victim of her ill-humour and discontent, said:

"Why, Effie, what's come over you? You used to be good-tempered;" then smiling and shaking his head, he took up his hat, again interchanged a glance of pitying intelligence with Miss Hodgens, and whispered: "Leave her alone awhile; just a wayward fit of childish petulance; she'll come right by-and-by, shook hands again with the lady, thanked her for her attention, bowed, and was gone.

Hugh had not proceeded far when he was accosted by a decent-looking woman in a frieze cloak, who, accompanied by a lad, appeared to be waiting for him. Coming up, she dropped a courtesy, and said, with apologetic, humble manner: "Might I make bould to spake just one word to yer honor?"

"Well, my poor woman, what have you got to say?" returned Hugh, as closely scrutinising the keen, investigating eye, that studied every trait of his countenance with a skill not the less masterly for being a little shrinking in its approach, he halted to listen.

"Please, yer honor," she began, in low diffident tone, beguiled by a hopeful and kindly countenance, "it's in regard o' this gossoon I'd only make so bould to throuble yer honour. I'm Kitty Burke; and whin I heard o' ye callin' to see the young lady, the Blessed Virgin put the thought into my head, that ye war the very one to ask advice to get him an' me out o' the throuble we're in, an' good-luck to yer fine comely face; it's the very moral of Miss 'Phemia's, barrin hers is more fiery an' sharp-set in feature."

"Then you are one of the Misses Hodgens' domestics?" said Hugh.

"Yis, yer honor; I'm cook in it this twelve month;—an' this is my son, as good a boy, tho' I'm his mother that say it, as ye'd meet in a day's walk."

"You want to get a place for him, I suppose?"

"No, yer honor; he's in a good place enough, only for the blackguards that's in it wid him." And then in her roundabout way Kitty detailed the circumstances of which we are in possession, to which having listened attentively, Hugh replied:

"It is a hard case, my poor woman, and I do not see how I can help you in it. I have no interest with the firm of Watkins, nor am I acquainted with any of the parties, to hope that any representation I could make would be attended to. I see quite well the jeopardy, not to say actual danger, of the boy's position. Hold! a thought has just occurred to me. I dine to-day at Mr. Damer's of Merrion-square; he may be of some use, if I could enlist his sympathy. Meanwhile, the only safe outcome I foresee from future difficulty will be to get his indentures cancelled—have you any objection to that?"

"The boy has sarved two year of his time, yer honor, an' sure wid that an' his schoolin' at the Dominicans he ought to be good for somethin'," was Kitty's sagacious rejoinder, deliberately given.

"Exactly so," said Hugh. "Then call on me to-morrow at my lodgings, in King-street. I'm now in a hurry," he added, looking at his watch. "Bring the boy with you, and I shall let you know the result of my application in his behalf, and what can be done for him. Would you be willing to accept a situation, my boy, in a gentleman's employment, and travel?"

"I'd do anything, yer honor, to earn an honest penny," cried the lad, his face brightening at the idea of travelling.

"Very good! call at ten o'clock to-morrow, at No. 11, and ask for Mr. Hugh O'Byrne," said the latter, hastening away, and leaving Kitty planted where she stood, with fervently joined hands, pouring out a vociferous tide of

blessings, quite indifferent to the broad stare or secret comments of the wayfarers passing to and fro, till she saw him out of sight. Then dismissing her son to his place, with a lightened bosom she returned to her own, intent upon surprising Miss 'Phemia with a narrative of her exploit, and to be more than ever a friend to the darlint colleen.

CHAPTER X.

THE POMFRETS.

"He were bold who now should wear his thoughts upon his brow
Beneath Sicilian skies. The brother's eye
Doth search distrustfully the brother's face ;
And friends whose undivided lives have drawn
From the same past their long remembrance
Now meet in terror, or no more : lest hearts,
Full to overflowing, in the social hour
Should pour out some rash word which
Roving winds might whisper."

Vespers of Palermo.—HEMANS.

"But who may trust the love of a degenerate race?"

LAST CONSTANTINE.

"JOHANNAH, my dear, I'll be obleeged t'ye for another cut of that Limerick 'am ; its so mello' an' well-tasted, it whets the happytite ; that an' the Dublin Bays,* an' the poteen is all of the best things the counthry 'as to boast of. Isn't it a wondher we can't 'ave 'em in England the same?" Such was the observation addressed by Mr. Toby Pomfret to his better-half, as one dull, wet morning they sat at breakfast in the gloomy, wainscotted, large back parlour of their newly-rented house in Earl-street, surrounded by a vigorous progeny of grown-up sons and daughters, upon whom they gazed with a parental pride, beautiful and edifying to witness. Same time the vivacious, twinkling eye of paterfamilias, divided in its interest, wandered complacently round, taking stock of the good fare profusely spread for the morning repast, while his

* Fresh herrings.

cup was being replenished with coffee, and his polished, ruddy cheeks, and full, soft lips of purple hue, smilingly expressed ineffable sweetness, founded either upon the serenity of a mind well satisfied with its present auxiliaries to enjoyment, or else reverting in thought to the time long ago, when, a little ragged cowboy, he took his place among a gang of farm hinds at a board strewn with potatoes and noggins of buttermilk, in the neighbourhood of Chapelizod, albeit this was not a theme on which he loved to dwell; nor did he often care to trace back the gradations by which, less owing to education or talent of a high order than to the low cunning of intellectual inferiority, unprincipled ability to lie, scheme, thieve, and abet, by his aid and concurrence, the master spirits of iniquity in their evil doings, flatter, court, and fawn upon men in power, and bully, persecute, and oppress the weak and humble, he had risen, from driving Farmer Heley's plough and cleaning the pig-stye, to be successively a cattle driver to Smithfield, a land steward, surveyor of the parish, small farmer and grazier, and finally agent to a nobleman, who, deriving all his income from Ireland, lived exclusively in England, and with a few compatriots of equal spirit courted English patronage by reviling the country whose sustenance they drained away, stigmatising the misery they contributed still more to impoverish, and bemoaning the fate that had cast their nativity upon such a soil. His ascendant fortune culminated in a wife of twelve thousand pounds fortune, the daughter of a Liverpool salesmaster, in whose higher-sounding name, by mutual consent, he finally merged his own cognomen of Paddy Spalpeen, conferred by his juvenile associates, and by which he subsequently went.

Though reared for the first ten years of his life a Roman Catholic by the poor woman who, going out one early morning to her daily labour in the fields, had found him exposed, naked and half-dead, in a ditch, a couple of days after his birth, and who carried him home and fostered him on her scanty means, Mr. Tobias Pomfret, now affluent and enlightened, entertained more than a sovereign contempt for the religion from which he had

been early weaned by the exhortations of a pious Protestant lady, who went about Christianising the benighted with creature comforts adapted to their several tastes, and who, with unctuous speech, putting a shilling into his hand, had converted him to go to church, where a new "shoot" of clothes, supplied by the parson, with bread and butter *ad libitum*, entirely succeeded in his twelfth year of convincing him of the errors of Romanism, and filling his heart with implacable hostility against priests and all those deluded Papists, whose bigotry and ignorance had so long held him in bondage, and closed against him the paradise of good victuals, fine clothes, and that worldly prosperity which he was now piously wont to believe and designate a divine blessing and reward bestowed upon him for his promptitude in obeying the call of grace, and emancipating himself from the fetters of idolatry. Betimes, indeed, a qualm seized him that all his perquisites were not divinely bestowed, or even well come by; but peccadilloes could not long oppress a conscience rebounding with elastic spring, and, like a high-spirited horse throwing its rider; every act he soon found motive to justify and to re-act again. Though Tobias Pomfret, like his patrons, could not ignore the country of which he was equally ashamed, it never occurred to them to surmise such a possibility as the country being ashamed of them. He laboured to convince the world that his opinions, tastes, and predilections were entirely English, that Ireland was but a place fit for savages, and himself an aggrieved individual, compelled by circumstances to dwell among such. For this end he cultivated the English accent, and gave his children each a twelve months' education in English schools to finish them. In his wife, whom he always styled his "better 'alf," he was also fortunate, inasmuch that their opinions tallied in many respects. She was religious, aspiring, clever, and had a good smattering of education, but was mostly read up in novels. She was half-sister to Mrs. Damer, between whom and herself there existed no small rivalry on the score of family and offspring, Mrs. Damer being wont to flout the self-conceited Johanna about her "igh connections, and the Portarlington family into which she had

marrid ;" and Mrs. Pomfret, on the other hand, in derision of the only issue, which had tardily come at the end of five years, turning out her own finely-bedizened brood to walk in Merrion-square, with their attendants, and craze Mrs. Arabella with envy ; while Mrs. Arabella retaliated by exhibiting Miss Damer, the lord's cousin, as finely caparisoned, followed by a footman, walking with Lady Alicia Luttrell, and enjoined to hold her head very 'igh when she met her cousins, with whom she was by no means to be too familiar, considering their inferior position in society—an injunction which the consequential young lady observed to the letter.

In his family, too, was Tobias Pomfret fortunate : he was the happy father of four daughters, upon whom the queenly names of Boadicia, Cleopatra, Penelope, and Andromacha, had been bestowed by their highly refined mother, who could not abide a common name no more than the wife of the Vicar of Wakefield, and who was ambitious to distinguish her progeny by high-sounding appellations that would enhance them as somebodies in society. Hence, his four sons, too, similarly fitted out, rejoiced in the denominations of Sardanapalus, Epiminandos, Lyeurgus, and Sesostris. Of the daughters, who varied in age between seventeen and twenty-one, we shall only say that they were most elaborately and artistically swathed in satin and brocade ; and decorated with rings, earrings, chains, and brooches of value. They had a flaunty, wealthy look that must have dazzled any eyes liable to appreciate art above nature, and opulence more than grace and beauty. The sons, whose years averaged between twenty-one and twenty-eight, we shall more particularly describe. Sardanapalus, the first-born of his parents—that is, in wedlock—was a fine tall young man, well formed in limb, and possessed of a physiognomy that anyone not skilled in the diagnosis of the human countenance might term good ; pale complexion, mild, regular features, innocent blue eyes—yes, he might be thought pleasing by many. In his childhood, his fond parents observing in him frugality of disposition, a cautious, argumentative character, a love of money, and precocious appropriative tendencies, agreed that he was of a steady, sensible turn, and gifted with *qualities* that would admirably suit him for the church.

"It pays well, is respectable, and may end in a bishopric," suggested Mr. Pomfret. To the church, then, with his own full consent, went Sardanapalus; for he not only entered into all his parents' views on the subject, but he had some pet notions to be carried out. He was fond of disputation upon theories of his own, and vain of his opinion: the pulpit would be a stage whereon to display his talent before an admiring audience; he had a morbid craving for admiration and applause; the church was just the theatre suited to his genius, and the development of his zeal; he had a natural predisposition to that kind of thing, was quite competent to expound Scripture, and ambitious to distinguish himself in a career to which he was so thoroughly adapted—he would have better said which was so thoroughly adapted to him.

Epiminandos, his next brother, a wild and vicious boy of very sinister aspect, was also destined for the church; and his qualifications, as set forth by his mother, rather startling to the uninitiated, were: "That dear Epiminandos was so wild, his father and she could think of nothing else for him."

"God bless me, ma'am!" cried an ingenuous friend, in amazement. "Is that a recommendation for so sacred a profession?"

"Oh, la! you don't understand," returned Madame Mère, with urbane smile. "That is our very reason for wishing it; because it will oblige him to reform and become steady if he hopes for preferment;—oh, the church for him, by all means!"

Lycurgus, the third son, and his brother Sesostrius having each a military taste, were forthwith appointed ensigns to respective regiments of cavalry and infantry. In newly donned regimentals, swaggering and supercilious, they were the terror of all, save their partial parents, whose eyes were never satiated admiring the incipient warriors; alternately martinets and libertines, they were at once the plague and delight of the corps to which they belonged, the horror of acquaintances, and the detestation of orderly civilians.

"Another cup of coffee, Epiminandos, my dear?" inquired Mrs. Pomfret, as she saw her second son, just ordained, drink off the aromatic beverage contained in his bowl.

"Please, maw; I'll also trouble you, Cleo, for a little cold fole and a crumpet."

"Snap," said Mr. Pomfret, addressing his first-born—when in family conclave—the Pomfrets used abbreviations and pet sobriquets—"I hear our friend Lamb complains that the people of the parish to which he has been appointed rector, in the room of Bradshaw, promoted to a Deanery, are slow in paying their tithes. How's that?—did Bradshaw let them fall into bad 'abits? Send me up a fried hegg—no, a Dublin Bay, Boa."

Sardanapalus, in the whitest and stiffest of neckties, emblematic of unsullied purity, and unbending principle, slowly dividing a piece of buttered toast, replied, with a nasal twang: "By no means, sir; but the old story, unwillingness of the priest-ridden clods to give the parson his due; but we'll soon knock that out of 'em."

"No doubt you will, my dear," smiled the mother, approvingly. "And our good Lamb will soon find that he has not done amiss in nominating our zealous young pawson to be his curate;—tell me, dear, had you a pleasant evening at Lady Clonmel's?"

"No, ma'am; I believe old Clonmel's taken to dying at last; he moped about the room like one abstracted, and looking for something he had lost: it quite spoiled the tone of the company, and the end was a confounded bore; I was sorry I went."

"Dear, dear!" soliloquised the father, meditatively. "After all, my friend Castlereagh's the trump: no sign of flagging there, egad!—dined with him the other day, in company with Castles, Armstrong, Toler, and a few others—all admitted by the back stairs, you know."—He winked slyly.—"Egad, we had a night of it: laid in the finest of venison, and rarest of wine, argued politics till we were hoarse, settled the affairs of the nation to our liking, and then turned to music, his lordship being an amateur, and prime in catches and glees: we had the violin, cornopean, and flageolet;—and, faith, when we all separated at the small hours of the morning, his lordship was as brisk as a hornet, the steadiest on his feet, and the clearest in his head of us all. But Clonmel's an old sack of tallow,

oozing out through every pore ;—bad, though, for our party, should he run out to the dregs just now ; though he growled and grumbled a good deal, like a spoiled and ill-humoured child, he was useful to us many ways, wasn't too scrupulous to give his aid in helping us to save the nation—in fact, we should miss him ;—to ourselves he has been a staunch partisan, but hasn't much religion ; poor fellow, he sneered at our putting you to the Church, and said we might have chosen an honester profession for you ; that for himself he had a better opinion of a highwayman than of a pawson. I say, gals," continued Mr. Pomfret, resting upon his fork like a weary boatman upon an oar, and manifesting symptoms of repletion, "what sort o' night had ye at Lady Barrington's?" The wife and daughters thus addressed looked up from their tea-cups. The third daughter, who was not at the moment engaged in masti-eating, made response, while she tossed back her ringlets with a contemptuous fling of her head :

"The company were for the most part commoners : the only titles in the room were Carhampton, and Lady Alicia, and Lord Kingsborough. I wonder at Lady Barrington not to be ambitious of a better show of good society!"

"So do I ; yet I know of some commoners that 'old their 'eads tol'rably 'igh—like Conolly of Castletown, Colclough of Tintern, and Byrne of Cabinteely," said her father. "But tell me, my gal, what beaux did ye cock yer cap at ; an' did ye see any finer wenches than yerself to bate the consate out o' ye?"

This time Cleopatra took upon herself to answer :

"There was no one there but the Misses Warbeck and their niece, who is engaged to Colandisk ; of course Susan Gubbins, Lady Alicia's familiar, the Whaley girls, and the elderly Beresfords, with the old dowager, Mrs. Day, and her *bung amie*, Charlotte Maudeville."

"I'm glad I kept out of the congregation," remarked Epiminandos, swallowing a piece of muffin.

"What did you do with yourself, Hip?" demanded his sire, now lounging back on his chair, with his hands resting in his fob-pockets.

"Dined at Daly's Club," returned Epiminandos, suck-

ing a chicken bone; "went afterwards with Bob and Jack, and Tom Newcomen to Crow-street, to see Mac Heath, banged up a row, got a bloody nose in the scuffle: but Sick and Sos can tell you more about it, as they were in the thick of it."

"My dear Hip," cried Mrs. Pomfret, looking reproachfully at the speaker, "can it be possible you will persist in follies which are so much at variance with your sacred profession, and cannot but prove detrimental to your worldly interest?"

"Never mind, mother!" exclaimed the young churchman, encouragingly;—"send me a hot kidney, will ye? I was disguised, only my wig fell off in the *mêlée*. I got it on in a trice, and was the admiration of a score of sober-minded cits, who eulogised the old fellow, venerably striving with foot and cudgel to make peace among the riotous, among whom ensigns Lic and Sos appeared ring-leaders-in-chief. I tell ye it was jolly fun! We put out the lights, smashed the benches, and laid the weight of our fists upon skulls, which, if they were not made of metal, must be aching in bandage and trepan by this. Oh! you wouldn't be so unreasonable as to have a fellow settle down into slippers and sober morning-gown, like my dad, until he's married and got a drag on the wheel, would you, now?" and the profligate young man stared with impudent effrontery into the smiling faces of his father and mother. "By-the-by," he added, "what pretty girls Flora Esmond and her cousin Ethel Courtney are!"

"For my part," lisped Boadicea, with sleepy eyes, heavily drooping with sentimental languor, "I can't see what's to admire in them; I'm sure I think them very much overrated."

"Bah, bah, you women!" sneered Sardanapalus; "mythology does not record that Juno admired Venus."

"Beg your pawdon, brother, but she did so, an' I'll prove it," grinned Sesostris, who set up for a wit. "Wasn't she jealous, and wasn't that a tacit admission of her rival's beauty—ha! ha! ha! Now, I want to know who would be uncharitable enough to criticise the charms of Susan Gubbins, or Jemmy Hodgens, or Beecy Watkins, who

haven't got among them so much as one impediment to render abortive the honourable condition of celibacy to which the Gorgons have doomed them."

"Dang it!" cried Mr. Pomfret, enthusiastically, "that's my very notion; not one of the lot can lay claim to as good looks as our own gals; an' by-the-way, Mrs. P., I was turning in my mind some matrimonial specs concerning 'em."

"Why," eagerly exclaimed Mrs. P., while her daughters looked all in a twitter, "has there been any proposals?"

"Not exactly; just some crotchets of my own," replied Mr. Pomfret, looking ambiguous, and tapping the cloth with his fingers.

"Dear Toby, let me know; don't keep me in suspense," entreated Mrs. Pomfret. "Good father as you are, you cannot enter into a mother's feelings on such a subject as the settlement of her daughters. I could die 'appy this moment, and with an easy 'eart, if I but see one or two of my gals married to lords; an' my 'alf-sister, Arabella Lacy—Damer I mean—taken down a feather about her 'igh connexion an' her daughters' prospects. Come, that's a duck!—tell yer own better-'alf, and trust her to co-operate in the business. Maybe Carhampton or Kingsborough, or that Scotch Lord Aongus is in your eye?"

"I didn't know my eyes were so big, ma'am, as to 'old three lords in 'em," grinned Mr. Pomfret, provokingly. "And as to Lords Carhampton, and Kingsborough, how many wives do you want 'em to 'ave? I think the lords 'ave no scarcity of Eves."

"Fie, fie, Toby! I'm ashamed of ye to speak that way before yer children," said Mrs. Pomfret, chidingly. "Don't you know wild young men never get those things properly done that don't mind their Church, or take the advice of friends. First, they choose ineligible partners, from whom they have to get separated in the divorce court; or they contract illegal marriages, which is worse again. But we'll take care there will be no such flaw or loophole in the thing; and I'll back our girls against a score to know how to keep their 'usbands in good-humour, and from breaking loose in the divorce court."

"No go, ma'am; ye've shot beside the mark. Lords Carhampton and Aongus Douglas of Straffa soar at higher game: they are paying court to Flora Esmond and Ethel Courtney." At this announcement Sardanapalus uttered an involuntary exclamation.

"What ails ye?" cried his father.

"Nothing;—go on," said the parson, not choosing then to avow the feelings he had long cherished in his heart towards this his ideal of all perfection, human and divine, Flora Esmond; and to cover the confusion of his retreat, he asked, impatiently: "Who, then, have you in view for the girls?"

"That shall be known in good time," returned his father, lolling back and closing his eyes.

"Meanwhile, I'll thrash Aongus Douglas!" fiercely vociferated Ensign Lycurgus, stroking the sprouting honours of his juvenile chin, and looking very formidable in the fact that he looked as venomous as an irritated wasp—and wasps we all know can sting fearfully too. His father unclosed his eyes and looked at him.—"Cod's life, I will!—I'm as good a man as he is any day, the Scotch mongrel," reiterated the fuming youth, kicking the sleek cat, which in evil hour on velvet-footed paws came confidingly prowling within his reach.

"Well, ay, but what will you thrash him for?" philosophically inquired his parent.

"What?—why?—because he has no business to come between me and her," blustered the ingenuous youth. "And I'll let him know it."

"Between you and who?" queried his uninitiated father, looking considerably puzzled.

"Between me and Ethel, of course," retorted the youth, indignantly.

His sire gave a low whistle, suggestive of increased bewilderment: "So—so, by Jabers, crazed in love! And is the lady agreeable?"

"I haven't asked her yet, but I mean to, shortly."

"Humph, ah! then I'll tell you what you'll do, my cock-o'-the-walk! spare yourself the pains, for a good many reasons," tauntingly returned his father.

"I'd like to hear a few of them," as tauntingly returned *the son*.

"Here they are at your service, as snug as bugs in a rug. What money has the gal got?—two thousand pounds—dickens a penny more. What money have you got of your own?—your pay;—so much a day and nothin' more. Lord Aongus has five thousand a year. An' will Miss Courtney's father give you, or the girl herself give you, the prefer over the nobleman, or do I set so little value on ye, Lick, or yer mother, to let ye go sell yerself for two thousand poun'? So I just bid ye mind yer eye, an' look out for a lass wid the yalla metal, an' plenty of it, an' not go bring in a pauper into the family to impoverish it, after all my labour to raise it an' make it what it is. There, them's my reasons, an' if ye don't like em', find better. If it wor Miss Esmond, now, the cousin——"

"You'd have perhaps kindly given your consent to my fobbing thirty thousand pounds, ye old miser!" muttered the aggrieved lover of Ethel Courtney. "But I'll please myself in spite o' ye;—d'ye hear that?"

"I do my lad, an' admonish ye that policy is a good helmsman and pilot, too; many a man has spoiled his beauty by frowning where he should have smiled, an' letting his tongue wag when he should have kept it behind his teeth;—d'ye hear that?" Unnoticed during this episode of domestic breach of harmony, the parlour-door had opened; the deep tones of the hall-clock striking eleven, first drew Mr. Pomfret's attention to the circumstance, and in loud, irascible tone he called out: "Who the plague is that listening there? Come in an' show yerself;—is it Joe?" Upon this the door was flung open wide, and a thick-set man, with jolter head, and broad, red face, distended in a humorous smirk, came waddling in, followed by another individual, tall, athletic, and, though smiling, of somewhat disconcerted aspect.

"Damer—Mr. Damer—Tom Damer!" was re-echoed in notes base and treble, as the visitor, with loud boisterous glee, advanced without ceremony, shaking hands with the ladies, and evidently making himself quite at home.

"Dang ye, what were ye pimping for? Couldn't ye have come in at once," cried Mr. Pomfret, glancing at Hugh O'Byrne, who was quite unknown to him.

"Haw ! haw ! haw !" laughed Tom Damer, with a fresh explosion of mirth. "Would ye have me intrude upon a fellow's confession of love for a pretty girl?—an' by my troth, Toby, bolt it as ye may, I tell ye, Lick has a good taste in making choice of Ethel Courtney."

"Hold yer tongue; what do you know about it?" growled Mr. Pomfret. "I'm not going to let the boy make a beggar of himself."

"Who wants ye?" was the curt response.

"What brings ye here?" was the laconic rejoinder, and Mr. Pomfret glanced again at the stranger, whom no one had the courtesy to ask to sit down.

"I want ye to do a job for me," said Mr. Damer, taking a chair, and inviting Hugh to another, while the latter, before seating himself, looked apologetically at Mrs. Pomfret and her daughters, surveying him with pursed lips and arrogant investigation. "That Watkins is a regular bear," continued Mr. Damer; "I've just called on him with my friend here, Mr. O'Byrne, to ask him to cancel the indentures of the boy, Ned Burke, and the old hunks told us 'he wouldn't do no such thing.'"

"Why should he?" demanded the other, with brevity.

"Why, you see, my friend has taken a fancy to have the boy, and I thought that if I, as partner of the firm, would ask him to oblige us he would have made no difficulty; as he has refused, I come to you, as head partner, to whom he will not say nay."

"But if I say nay to ask him?" returned Mr. Pomfret, with another glance at Hugh.

"But you won't, Toby," coolly responded Damer.

"I don't know that," answered Toby, taking a huge pinch of snuff; and then he addressed Hugh: "So you want to have the lad's indentures cancelled, sir?" Hugh smiled affirmatively. Pomfret resumed, with air at once pompous, patronising, and speculative: "Look you here! I say, sir, cast your eyes around this apartment upon my family and surroundings, and tell me is anything wanting to the comfort you see? Now, sir, my father and mother left me neither name nor fortune; hence I have disowned them, put my own hand to the plough,

sowed the seed, and gathered the harvest without help of any hand but my^{own}, till, as you see, I've made name and fortune for myself and them that come after me;—how do you think I did it?" Hugh, wondering to what this preamble tended, fixed his eyes inquiringly upon the speaker, who feeling he had made an impression, resumed. "First, sir, I was ambitious; next, I was industrious; and thirdly, I made it a fixed principle never to give without a *quid pro quo*—you know what that means sir?—give and get is my system; nothing for nothing. Now, sir, you want me to oblige you; you want a favour from me?—and I answer I'm willing to strike the bargain—in a word, to make sale of my capital;—do you take that in?"

"I understand you so far," returned Hugh, stiffly.

"Then, sir, are you satisfied to accede to my terms?"

"Let me hear them first," said Hugh, warily, and not knowing whether to be most disgusted at the man's effrontery or amused by his speculative genius; while Mr. Pomfret made a pause, debating within himself, probably, what might be the most advantageous point to stipulate.

His eldest son, burning to give vent to his soul, and signalise at once his zeal and his talents, turned to the stranger, and eyeing him with a probing look, that yet was sinister in its expression, said in mild, glozing accents: "Pray, sir, may I ask do you profess loyal principles?"

Hugh, thus challenged, replied for the first time, indicating symptoms of a slumbering lion in his bosom: "In this country, sir, there are, unfortunately, various definitions of the word. If you will be so kind as to construe for me yours, I shall be better able to answer you."

"Oh, pardon me!" returned the discomfited questioner, pale with vexation, and betraying in every altered lineament—mean, crafty, cruel—the condition of his antecedents the history of bygone progenitors. "I thought one in outward semblance of a gentleman would have possessed erudition enough to dispense with the interpretation of a word familiar to every schoolboy."

Hugh stifling with difficulty a very choleric emotion, tumultuously clamouring for expression, in his dislike to be drawn into controversy by an antagonist with whose spleen

he felt he would have more to combat than with his reason, remained judiciously silent; but Epiminandos, fired with impulse not to suffer one whom he conceived to be already half-vanquished, or at least a pusillanimous foe to quit, resolved to drag him out, and make him show fight, for the pleasure of worsting him, plunged into the arena of conflict, and cried, lustily :

"My brother means, sir, do you acknowledge the king and go to church?"

Hugh calmly made answer, looking thoughtfully upon the flippant young parson and his friends, now rivetted in attention upon him :

"My dear sir, I did not come here for the purpose of discussion; nevertheless, fearing lest my silence should be misconstrued, I am happy to avow my principle, and proclaim that I am a Roman Catholic, which I take to be the information you strive, in a roundabout way, to come at."

Epiminandos reddened, but in tone of a bully exclaimed :

"By Jingo! I guessed as much; your name, like the Gallileans', betrays you."

Hugh smiled pleasantly. "I'm beholden to you, sir, for compliment, albeit I had been taught it was his accent, not his name, which betrayed the greatest of our saints."

"Pooh, you needn't raise a quibble on't; you know well enough what I mean;—and, faith, your accent is to the full as damning as ever Peter's was."

Hugh covered his face with a hand broad as a shield to indulge the mirth he could not repress, yet did not like to exhibit.

Ensign Lycurgus, anxious to sling his small stone at the pyramid, in the hope of displacing, or at least shaking the leviathan, said: "Egad, 'tis a bad name you own to, at any rate. If it were mine I'd change it."

"What you say is true, sir," responded Hugh, proudly, rearing his head. "Mine is not a name in good repute with Government, since no name in the country is so deeply branded with what English statesmen stigmatise as rebellion. History, that babbling tell-tale, records that the O'Byrnes were the last of the native chieftains who

disputed with England for their country's independence, and with few exceptions the only ones upon whose escutcheon the stigma of treason to their native land or to their friends never rested. Yes, the O'Byrnes were the last to lay down their arms in their country's cause."

"And would be the first to take them up again," cried Sesostris, watching for the moment to fling his pebble, and rudely interrupting the speaker.

"Why not? Would you not be proud yourself to be a patriot?"

"Me a patriot!—a rebel!" yelled Sesostris, with a look of unutterable indignation.

"A patriot need not be a rebel," suggested Hugh.

"It's all one; a patriot is a rebel," stoutly retorted Sesostris. "I'm a loyal man, and the king's my cause."

Hugh sighed; he felt it was too true. Patriotism in Ireland was synonymous with rebellion when the interests of the two countries clashed; the stronger beat down the weaker, and the writhing efforts of the latter to rise from beneath the heel that crushed her was denominated resistance—rebellion.

The stentorian voice of Mr. Pomfret, who had had enough of an argument in which he took no present interest, and which delayed a transaction in which he was interested, was heard exclaiming:

"Hold, my lad; ye've said yer say, an' let the rest wait, while this gentleman and I settle the matter in hand. Now, sir"—he turned to Hugh—"this is my proposal, fair an' square. If I get the boy's indentures cancelled for you;—see, here's a paper I'm getting signatures to, to oblige my good friend, Lord Castlereagh, who thinks it would be a good thing for the interest of the country to bring about the Union. I don't deny that I expect to be paid for the votes I bring in. So you see it is a business transaction. Just be so good, as I know you're a man of mark, and related to Mr. Byrne of Cabinteely, just to write your name here, and promise to get me all the votes ye can. Andy"—to his youngest daughter—"run fetch the pen and ink, my posy.

"Nay, do not take the trouble," quickly responded

Hugh, rising. "If such be your terms, sir, I must decline them: I cannot subscribe my assent to a measure which every honest man protests against, as fraught with disaster to the nation."

"Oh, hang your scruples!" growled Mr. Pomfret, vexed, but too great a diplomatist to be put out. "I'm a plain, straightforward man, and can't see with such cute eyes what mighty mischief's to come of it; anyhow, a vote more or less doesn't signify; an' since that bargain doesn't suit ye, maybe another will. Now, all I want, as I dare-say you're an United Irishman, is an introduction to the friends of whatever centre you belong to. Here in Bridge-street the society is complete, and can admit no more: so my friend Reynolds told me."

The trap set before Hugh was so flimsily concealed, or rather so plain to view, that it needed but small discernment for seeing and shunning it. Simply wondering, does the man take me for a fool or a villain, Hugh replied: "I am not an United Irishman, nor do I belong to any society of such, though solicited by Captain Armstrong and your friend Mr. Reynolds for my opinion on the subject, which I freely gave, that I have no faith in their success. I therefore am not in a position to comply with your wish."

"Humph!" grunted Mr. Pomfret, viewing Hugh with disfavour; "you don't trust me?—I suppose you think I'd let the cat out o' the bag. You don't believe I could make other capital out of it that would hurt nobody, while it would serve me. Well, I can't help you. Here, put your name to this I.O.U. for fifty pounds and ye shall have the boy."

Hugh was not so well off in worldly circumstances as to feel quixotic enough to distress himself by purchasing the freedom of a boy of whom he knew nothing, and in whom alone he felt interested by his mother's story and the lad's own ingenuous countenance; so without the remotest intention of striking such a bargain, he merely said: "I'm sorry I can't do it;" and he turned and looked some time at Mr. Damer, to intimate that they

might as well be going ; but Damer, otherwise deciphering the look, clapped his hand on his fob, and exclaimed :

" My dear sir, you needn't look to me to help you in money matters ; command me in all else, but to save a man from the gallows I wouldn't lend my money, or go security, or any such desperate thing."

" Excuse me," interrupted Hugh, " I did not think of asking it."

" No, sir ; of course you didn't ; I only thought you looked at me. Sir, I'd be sorry to lose in your opinion ; so let me say I'm no miser. You saw my house and the style of my living in Merriion-square ; I spare nothing on my family an' myself—why should I ? I'm proud to say, like my friend Toby, I earned it hard, an' began life as low down on the ladder."

" No, ye didn't," hallooed Toby, getting excited.

" Yes, I did," bellowed Damer, waxing wroth. " Don't I remember when I was a kid, in praskeen apron an' brown paper cap, cutting pork chops and weighing sausages for customers, in Brown and Clark's, the victuallers, of Francis-street. Many's the shin o' bacon them hands cut, that now can show rings o' goold on 'em," holding up a red fist to be admired.

" I thought you were related to the Portarlingtons, Tom ?" sneered Mrs. Pomfret, ashamed of such low beginnings exposed to a stranger, whom she had meant to impress with a due sense of the Pomfret consequence.

" Ma'am, like Toby, I disown my parentage that disowned me. It's only my wife and Caroline strive to hang upon the peg out o' their reach—more fools they !" cried Damer, fiercely ; and in the hurry and vehemence of the combatants, emulous of proving each his claim to have graduated from the lowest rung of the ladder, reversing the knightly vaunt of being sprung from the highest, the door again creaked open, and a fat, roly-poly of a child, about seven years old, in plaid frock and thick feet, cased half-way up his brawny legs in coarse blue woollen socks and heavy shoes, came lumbering in, pouting, blubbering, and with dirty fingers indented into his eyes and smearing his squat red cheeks, giving tokens

of trouble distressing his juvenile mind, for which he came to seek alleviation.

"Is that Joe? What ails ye, my Highlandher;—eh, what's my babby cryin' for?" demanded Mr. Pomfret, while Mrs. Pomfret held out her hand to her brother Charley's son and heir, whom she had consented to bring up, as his mother, a Papist, it was feared, would have instilled into him her own principles. "Come, Sonny, tell aunty what ails ye."

"Oo—oo—oo! I lost my ball in the sthraw up the loft. Oo—oo—oo!" mournfully wailed the afflicted innocent.

"Tut, man, is it a man like you cryin' [for that?]" scoffed Mr. Pomfret. "Dry your eyes; there's a good boy. Don't cry, an' I'll buy you a soord to kill the rebels." Joe brightened, and suspended lamentations, while he looked eagerly up.

"Will ye, tho', Uncle Toby. Me'd like to kill the rebels;—but where'll I find them?" said the engaging creature, with charming innocence.

"Faith, I'll take ye with me down to Beresford's riding-school, where ye'll have plenty of 'em," grinned the delighted Pomfret;—"plenty of rebels and croppies, my young soldier, to practise on."

"Me'd sooner 'ave a gun to shoot 'em," spoke up the infant soldier, gazing wistfully through his tear-sprent lashes at the faces of his admiring kinsfolk.

"So you shall, then, my Trojan, 'ave a soord an' a gun both," said Mr. Damer. "Now, what do you say to that?"

"And how soon will we go, unker, to kill 'em?"

"Ain't he a fine boy; ain't he just the miniature of an officer in regimentals?" cried the exhilarated Mr. Damer, something after the manner of Squeers exhibiting his promising offspring.

Hugh, extremely disgusted, said, severely: "Do you think it well as a Christian, sir, that the earliest lesson n-culcated and established in the mind of a child should be one training him to emulate the inhumanity of a Nero or a Domitian?—to forget that man was his fellow-creature, and ——"

"Oh, bosh!—stuff, you Papists!" roared Mr. Pomfret, furiously. "Here, you go an' out the cat's tail off, only mind she doesn't bite or scratch you;" handing his pen-knife to the child, and preparing to leave the room. "One word more, sir, before I go. Money's money, an' I don't like to lose any offer—tain't lucky. What will you offer me for the boy, in reason?"

Hugh thought a moment;—somehow he began to feel more interest in the youth. He thought what a den it was from which he might be rescued, and he felt as though it were a duty he was called upon to perform in his regard. Yet money was scarce enough with him; so, bluntly he answered, yet (such is human nature) half hoping Pomfret would refuse it, and feeling he would be exonerated from doing more than his means allowed:

"At a word, twenty pounds."

Pomfret was satisfied. Hugh handed him a check for the amount, and was taking his hat to leave the room, with Pomfret and Damer, to call on Watkins, when Sardana-palus, in blandest tone, rising again, addressed him:

"I think, my dear sir, if you would honour me by coming to my church on the next Sabbath, and hear me expound the Scripture, I could enlighten you, and convince your understanding of the errors imposed upon you by the Church of Rome. I'm sure one of your mental calibre would not, from mere obstinacy, persevere like the ignorant vulgar, in hugging delusions and superstitions, derogatory to manly sense and reason. Hence, in a spirit of true fraternal love, I invite you to come hear me; and should I succeed, as I have no doubt, in making a convert of you, what a recompense it will be for my labour, what an edification to my flock, what a triumph to the Church, what an advantage to your own interest!"

Hugh heard him patiently to the end, then said:

"Sir, it would seem to me that the first requisite in those who would profess to instruct others is knowledge themselves of that which they would impart. In humility, the fundamental basis of every virtue, without which there neither can be faith—for the proud man will only believe so much as in the light of his reason it pleases

him to believe—nor hope nor charity, which are grounded upon faith, you seem to be sadly deficient. Now, let me tell you, the poor peasant that ploughs the glebe, knows more of religion than you could teach him or me ; he might not, perhaps, more than myself, be competent to discuss abstruse divinity or subtle questions ; but in his knowledge of simple Christian dogmas, and practice of Christian virtues his knowledge is sufficient to secure his happiness here and his salvation hereafter. What more does he want ? For the rest, there has been of our family but one who, clinging to this world's paltry things, suffered himself to be intimidated or seduced into the profession of a Church in which he had no faith. Let me hope that the first and last apostate of our line is buried with him. I wish you good-morning."

CHAPTER XI.

THE CRUCIAL TEST.

"Thinkest thou there dwells no courage but in breasts
That set their mail against the ringing spears,
When helmets are struck down ? Youth may not loiter now
In the green walks of spring, and womanhood
Is summoned unto conflict, heretofore
The lot of warrior souls."

Siege of Valencia—HEMANS.

"THERE's the post!" exclaimed Miss Fanny Warbeck Higgenboggan, laying down her spectacles and the morning paper, which she was just in the act of perusing, when the loud "rat-tat" of the letter-carrier, reverberating sonorously through the silent mansion, made itself heard in the drawingroom. "I wonder what news shall we have of Jeremiah to-day, Sophy?" And as she said this, John the gloomy butler, entered and presented a letter on a silver salver, which Miss Fanny took, glanced at, and only waited for the servant to quit the room to turn to her sister and utter the monosyllable, "Dead!" as she held up the black seal in confirmation of her announcement.

“Break the seal and read it, Fanny,” said Miss Sophy, putting down the fat pug-dog from her lap.

She did not look disturbed or excited by the intelligence, no casual eye would have guessed that the self-possessed lady took even the ordinary interest that one might be supposed to feel for even a distant acquaintance, in the calm, dry tone, with which she heard the tidings; in which, nevertheless, she was deeply concerned. But Miss Warbeck was too matter-of-fact to express surprise at an event which she had been long expecting, and too dignified to exhibit any emotion she might have experienced upon the occasion.

“The letter is directed in another hand, too,” said Miss Fanny, whose lips twitched a little as she opened it, and with strong, steady voice read :

15 Great Strand-street, London.

“MADAM,—It is with extreme regret I have to inform you of the death of your brother, Mr. Jeremiah Higgenboggan, which melancholy event took place on the morning of the 6th inst. As executor to his last will and testament, I am happy to inform you that you and your sister have been each left seven thousand pounds in the funds; and to his niece, Miss Alphonse Fitzpatrick, the residue of his wealth, fifty thousand pounds, with his house, plate, furniture, carriage and horses—but acting on your wise suggestion, subject to the conditions that she conforms to the Church of England, failing in which, she is cut off with a shilling, and the money and effects be appropriately vested in the cause of several charities, to wit, the Ipswich Grammar School, the London Hospital for Foundlings, and the founding of an institution for the maintenance of superannuated horses, donkeys, and stray dogs. Awaiting, madam, your commands and instructions, I have the honour to remain, yours,

“CADWALDER RUGBY.”

As Miss Fanny concluded the epistle she looked with serious visage, somewhat blank in expression, at her sister. Miss Sophy's saturnine visage betrayed a flickering glow

of satisfaction as she said, holding a fan between her and the fire, for the day was raw and cheerless: "Seven thousand pounds a piece to us!—that was handsome of poor Jeremiah; for to tell you the truth, Fanny, I didn't think he'd have left us anything, men are such queer creatures, and poor Jerry was always so odd."

"Well," returned Fanny, "I always felt sure he'd leave us something nice, for he was a good-hearted poor fellow;—but I'm sorry about Alphonse."

"Why so?—she has been left the bulk of the property, as I always knew she would; he never disguised his intentions; he was infatuated about that child."

"You see he was grateful to the father and mother for having nursed him through that bad typhus fever, and in his convalescence rescuing him, at risk of their own lives, from the house when it caught fire; indeed I think the injuries he received did ultimately cause her father's death."

"But he doesn't say a word about the boy Patrick," said Miss Sophy.

"No; he never forgave his running away from Oxford, and becoming a priest.—But about Alphonse: you see the clause in the will, I'm afraid, may damage her. I'm sorry we interfered."

"Not at all, Fanny," replied Miss Higgenboggan, tartly; "it was the only means left to overcome the obstinacy of the girl; and don't suppose she's such a fool as to persevere in folly, to the detriment of her own interest; at the same time, I'll be candid enough to admit I didn't think Jerry would have come to such a cracked conclusion. I had anticipated his leaving the money in our hands—at least, during our lives—to be applied at our discretion, for her benefit: that is the only clause with which I am dissatisfied;—but Jerry had always a slate off: only think of a foundling hospital, a grammar school, and livery-stables swallowing up fifty thousand pounds, and whatever more his effects bring, in the contingency of Alphonse proving obstinate. What's she doing now?"

"She has been all the morning engaged with the dress-maker, giving directions about her wedding outfit. It seems to me all frippery and gew-gaw; she is getting, for

instance, a Leghorn hat, trimmed with amber satin, and bird-of-paradise plume; white bombazine dinner dress, fangdangoed with fringe and ribbons; lilac silk scarf, pale blue tabinet promenade dress, and petticoats all trimmed with lace; and when I reasoned with her, and said a couple of good stuff gowns, and some chintz calicoes, with one or two good dark-coloured silk dresses, brown or purple, would be so much more useful, she answered, with a pert smile, that she liked to get what was both useful and pretty, and would become her, as she would not like Guildford to think her a dowdy."

"Just like her," observed Miss Warbeck; "all for show. For my part, I never saw the day I would put beauty in competition with utility."

"Oh, my dear, Alphonse would tell you she could combine them," cried Miss Fanny, derisively; "at any rate, let us send for her, till we know how she will take the news we have for her. Somehow, my mind misgives me, she is such a wilful being;—ring the bell, Sophy!"

Sophy obeyed, and presently a tall, lathy woman, of about five-and-thirty, with yellow complexion, nose that described a triangle, large mouth, and slow, scrutinising eyes, alternately bold and furtive, came softly in.

"Did ye ring, ma'am? John's gone to the brewers to send home the beer."

"Yes, Betty; go and tell Miss Alphonse I wish to speak to her," said Miss Warbeck.

Exit Betty Jolly; and in a few minutes Alphonse came in, with a white cambric handkerchief, which she was prettily embroidering with snowdrops; she held it up, saying:

"Do you like that, Aunt Sophy?"

"What's the good of it. Wasn't the handkerchief very good without it?" was the philosophic response.

Alphonse knew her aunt too well to be disappointed, so she only said:

"I think it looks pretty; don't you?"

"I see no particular beauty in it. I like rich substantial articles, that demonstrate sense, and affluence, and comfort, such as good silks and costly jewels; but for the

tinsel and claptrap of apparel, or such things as flowers and gimcracks, with which some people are fond of littering their drawingrooms, I have no taste;—however, that's not what I now want to say to you. Guildford Colandisk is a lucky man; I hope he will deserve it, since you are bent upon the folly. Your Uncle Jeremiah is dead!"

Alphonse for a moment stood silent, with lips apart; then her eyes dimmed with tears, and in low tone she murmured:

"Poor Uncle Jeremiah!"

"There, you needn't act the sentimental," cried Miss Fanny; "you know we have been long expecting it. Asthma, though slow, is sure to kill in the end; besides, you haven't seen him for years, and he has provided for you handsomely, as we always knew he would. There, read that letter."

"Oh, aunty, if it were only for all his goodness to me, I loved him, and am sorry for him," sobbed Alphonse, sitting down to read the letter, which, tearfully and slowly, she did to the end, while her aunts watched her countenance to see the effect made upon her by its contents. They were not long in suspense: one so unsophisticated could not long disguise her emotions: a very evident cloud of disappointment settled upon her brow and saddened every feature; yet, when she came to the end, she made no other sign, but sat with the letter resting on her knee.

"Well, isn't that good of Uncle Jeremiah?" exclaimed Miss Warbeck, superbly. "All at once our poor ward is become a wealthy heiress."

Alphonse burst into tears. "Uncle Jeremiah meant well, aunt," she sobbed; "but it's no use, and I wouldn't have cared for myself; but poor Guildford will be so disappointed."

"Disappointed at what, child?" cried the aunts, simultaneously. "At getting a girl with fifty thousand pounds, a fine house in London, carriage, &c.—is it raving you are?"

"Oh! I can't, I can't! you know, aunty, I cannot," sighed Alphonse, piteously; "why did you do such an unkind thing, aunt, as to get Uncle Jeremiah to make such a will; oughtn't poor me to have been more to you than *anything*?"

"Don't be taking leave of your senses, Alphonse," cried Miss Warbeck, authoritatively; and, as she spoke, the door opened and Guildford Colandisk came smiling in; but upon the threshold he stood transfixed at seeing the perturbed aspect of the group—the Misses Warbeck very ruffled and his *fiancées* in tears. The elder ladies, finding they had now an auxiliary to sustain them, cordially welcomed the young man, exclaiming as they shook hands:

"Isn't this a nice ado about nothing, Guildford? We're so glad you've come! Just look at Alphonse, the state she's in because, forsooth, she can't have fifty thousand pounds unless she goes to church—did you ever know such folly? What a nice wife she'll make."

Alphonse stood up, came over, and put her hand into that of the perplexed Colandisk, saying the while, in accents low and tremulous:

"It's a great disappointment, Guildford; but 'tis not for myself I feel it; and if I thought you would not I'd be as happy as ever."

Guildford looked more puzzled at the Misses Warbeck, with a shade of gloom pervading his countenance. Miss Fanny said:

"We have just received intelligence of the death of our dear brother Jeremiah. He made a will, poor fellow, remembering us very handsomely, but leaving Alphonse fifty thousand pounds, and his house and carriage in London, subject to the condition, I see by a postscript I had overlooked in the executor's letter, of her conforming within one month from the date thereof—and there's the whole cause of her childish temper."

At this announcement, Colandisk cut a caper that rather astonished the staid Miss Warbeck. His brow cleared, seizing Alphonse in his arms, he embraced her rapturously, crying aloud in ecstasy:

"We'll set the church bells ringing, make the cathedral shake, and the parson stare what time we trip to the wedding!—hurrah! hurrah! Give me something, I pray, to drink to the pious, glorious, and immortal memory of Jeremiah Warbeck Higgenboggan, my betrothed wife, and her excellent aunts, whom from this day henceforth are to

be my kith and kin." Here the parrot, who had been all the morning slumbering drowsily on his perch, stirred up by the exhilarating commotion, shook himself, surveyed the group with winking eyes, then vented his ideas in drowsy, guttural speech :

"Green gooseberries! ha, ha, ha! Betty, don't let on I toul't ye. Fine Carlingford oysters! John, where's the brandy?" And with a furious whistle, and mocking laugh, the feathered biped subsided into contemplation.

"That's an extraordinary bird," said Miss Sophy; "he picks up everything he hears; and the worst of that is, our servants tell us he learns to say what he shouldn't from the bad boys in the street, which is very unpleasant."

"Very!" exclaimed Guildford, turning to gaze upon Alphonse, who, having disengaged himself from his caress, was now standing, sad and pensive, looking with dreamy eyes at the mizzling rain blurring the window panes, and trickling in large cold drops down the crystal surface. Guildford addressed her :

"Well, lady fair, let who will mourn, we have subject for rejoicing; wherefore, cheer up, my sweet! and let me see again upon your cheek the roses, and in your eyes the sunbeams that wooed and won my heart. Your good uncle must be happy in the good he has left behind him in making us two happy—bless the fine old soul! I'm only sorry a necessary interval of mourning must, in deference to etiquette, delay our bliss; but we'll make it as short as we can."

Alphonse turned and gazed full upon the young man, whose visage, beaming with smiles and admiration, was rivetted upon her. She had been deeply musing; for beneath all her gay exterior there was a stratum of profound wisdom, hidden by a luxuriant overgrowth of wild verdure, which, when stripped away by wintry floods, or scorching heat, would be revealed. She felt that now, at once and for ever, she must open her mind, and leave no doubt upon his, of the future. It was an ordeal fiery and bitter that was set full before her, a trial of strength with a great temptation, whose issue must be victory or defeat—an inexorable extremity which for her could admit

of no compromise. What might be the sequel she could not conjecture, but she was not at liberty to choose. Grieving for the pain she must inflict upon one dearly loved, trembling for the possible consequence to herself, she at length spoke, and her once joyous accents vibrated and quivered :

"Dear Guildford, do not blame me, I cannot help myself. It is better I should at once undeceive you: you know I am a Roman Catholic."

"Well, what about it?" eagerly cried Colandisk; "be it as long as you please; but that needn't hinder your complying with a matter of form—showing yourself once at church and complying with whatever other nonsensical crotchet the law requires."

Alphonse, smiling sadly at the lax notions of her suitor, shook her head, and answered :

"I cannot, Guildford; I should have to make an act of recantation, which would at once cut me off from my own Church, and involve me in the penalty of excommunication; I dare not do that."

The cloud returned to the brow of Colandisk; but this time it was charged with electricity, prognostic of thunder.

"Why, what an intolerant Church is yours!" he wrathfully exclaimed: "enough, Alphonse, to make one hate it."

"Nay, Guildford, nay," interposed Alphonse, with voice new strung, and eye reanimated by the energy of excitement, "my Church cannot help herself more than I, else would she choose poverty, misery, and persecution, where she might have worldly honour and riches. No; but she alone is the repository of truth, which she must both teach and confess: she cannot give sanction to her children to go astray, to forswear themselves, or for any temporal interest to play the cheat, to give the lie to her doctrine, or to endorse for one instant, by one act, a collusion with heresy. Alas! I fear me I appeal in vain to minds prejudiced and closed against argument, nevertheless, I cannot help it; I must but suffer."

Sorrowfully her gaze declined before the eyes concentrated upon her, and the stern faces, unmollified by one

relenting feature. Colandisk spoke; his accents were low and hollow:

"I had thought you loved me, Alphonse?—at least you beguiled me into the belief."

"Oh! that you would ever doubt it, Guildford, would be the bitterest pain of all. Ask me for any test, for any proof of my truth, but that which must compromise my soul, and freely I make it. If to go with you into exile, to live in toil, poverty, or sickness, yours, yours only!—faithful, and true! I can do it without a murmur, and be happy. God with us, we would prosper, and never have to mourn or regret a sacrifice we made for Him."

"Thank you; how shall I ever hope to requite such disinterested affection?" returned Colandisk, in a tone that made her recoil heart-struck, and gaze as one fascinated with mingled dread and wonder upon his altered physiognomy, thinking within herself—"Is this Guildford?" "You offer kindly to share penury with me," he continued, in accents of cutting sarcasm; "but let it not surprise you, dear girl, that I, whose aspirations and tastes are formed in quite another mould, should be reluctant, even for your bright smiles, to descend to the level of the herd, wear hoddens gray, dine off yellow ware—the cottager's delight—and experience all the other abominations of vulgar poverty. You would not expect it, my sweet Alphonse?" he added, with relaxing smile, ignited by some latent hope; she looked so mild and pensive that he would yet bend her to his views.

"I should not expect it," she meekly murmured. "But, I thought—I felt—that is, I had some hope you would have been true to me through any change of weal or woe; 'tis hard, very hard, to have one's faith shaken, where one trusted, and to have to unlove what had made the paradise of one's life."

"Very true, dear Alphonse; and you will not sentence him who loves you to idolatry to such anguish as should be his—a desolate, loveless life—if compelled by inexorable *fat* to relinquish that which alone makes life worth living for?" pathetically sighed Colandisk, while the Misses Warbeck, grimly attentive, began to think that after all

the young man spoke very rationally, and possessed more sense than they had given him credit for. "Come now, my precious darling," proceeded the wooer, waxing ardent, "just say the one word that will reillumine the almost extinguished torch of hope in this faithful bosom, and say you will comply with the exigency of circumstances and secure our bliss?"

"I cannot, Guildford, upon the terms proposed," wept Alphonse. "It is vain to ask me?"

Guildford Colandisk drew up his small, symmetrical figure, and with a countenance from which every vestige of tenderness and grace had vanished, and been replaced by an expression of selfish, heartless, callous hauteur, he made answer:

"'Tis so best, the delusion under which I had laboured, that one of race so intractable, of blood so antagonistic, of nature so inferior, could be reclaimed from obduracy, is banished; the wild animals of the forest may be tamed by kindness, and—" "Nix, my dolly," sung out the parrot, waking up as though conceiving a notion to enliven a scene so lugubrious with a touch of the ludicrous. Guildford glanced irefully at the impertinent creature, and continued: "Subdued to docility by caresses, but to humanise or win by love any of these people is just like trying to catch and hold an *ignis fatuus*." Thus far he had communed half-aloud, as if with his own thoughts. Now he turned to Alphonse, who, first astonished, then stirred to resentment, by a sense of insult conveyed by his lucubrations, stood erect and tearless, surveying him with wide-open eyes, dry and feverish. "Be it so, Alphonse, since you so decree it. I depart with a bleeding bosom, never, be assured, to return, unless a mandate from your own dear lips, or under your own hand, summons me to hear that you have thought better of it, that you have yielded to love and pity, and decided upon that step which alone can lead to the lost path of our felicity. Farewell! first, last, and only love, farewell."

"Farewell, Guildford," she responded, with something like an ingredient of scorn giving strength to her syllables.

A tear started to his eye of genuine disappointment, as

in vision he beheld receding far beyond his reach the golden shower that had all but rained down its affluent streams upon him, and then vanished like a mocking mirage.

Her eyes were tearless now, as she stood still and heard the hall-door shut behind him, for there had been no further leave-taking. The voices of her aunts, after some moments, recalled her from her abstraction:

"What are you going to do with yourself now?" demanded Miss Warbeck, with the air of one who had been deeply offended.

"I don't know, aunt," responded Alphonse, in disconsolate accents.

"You managed that business nicely," ironically observed Miss Fanny. "You may put away your finery, and countermand your wedding orders, for I can tell you, Guildford will never come back, he is a young man of too much spirit."

"I don't expect him, aunty," she sorrowfully murmured.

"What an idiot you were to throw away such a match!" cried Miss Warbeck, severely; "who do you intend to marry now?—or, rather, who do you think will take you?—the dairy man that serves the milk, or the man that carries the bread, perhaps. You will have to do something, for your Uncle Jeremiah has not left us the usual stipend for your maintenance, nor to yourself the usual remittance per annum."

Alphonse woke up from her apathy and despondence, to gaze upon her aunt with incredulous eyes. Had her ears deceived her?—but Miss Warbeck soon confirmed her that she had heard aright.

"It is all that is before you now, you misguided girl, to make some humble alliance, or to earn your own livelihood."

There is a crucible into which the human heart once plunged, with all the thoughts, passions, feelings, and instincts of human nature, to be annealed by fire, wrought upon, and changed by the action of the mysterious chemistry to which it has been subjected, it comes forth new moulded, new created, as it were, never more in its original character to be the same: the intrinsic qualities, indeed, of the genuine metal shine out, perhaps, with more bril-

liant lustre, but the alloy has entered into every pore, to harden the ductile substance and reconstruct its nature : so it was in this hour of crucial test with Alphonse Fitzpatrick. An hour had scarcely elapsed since, summoned to the presence of her aunts, she stood before them in the full glow of her life's summer, in every feature of her face displaying the charm of confiding innocence, and the grace of truth, tenderness, and love, allied to a lofty mind, and a soft, genial spirit, that took on trust all men to be perfect and noble as her own perception coloured them ; now they looked upon a form, darkly serene to outward eye, whose breast enshrined a heart indeed of gold, yet in which every pulse and fibre seemed to stand still, choked and swollen with a tide of accumulated emotions. It was not long rebounding from the shock of the plunge into the ordeal. She said, calmly, quelling a gush of agony rising to her throat :

"Of course not, aunt ; I do not mean to be an incumbrance." She glanced drearily at the slow falling rain making puddles in the street, then left the room, and in about ten minutes returned, dressed to go out.

"You're not setting off at this moment in the wet, I suppose ?" said Miss Warbeck, taking a knife and fork from Mrs. Betty, who was laying the cloth for luncheon, to give a bit of chicken to the pug ; "the house is not on fire, that you need be off at a minute's notice."

"Thank you, aunt, 'tis all the same," coolly responded Alphonse, turning away from the shrewd, surprised glance of Mrs. Betty ; "what has to be done may as well be done at once. If you will be so kind as to keep my trunks for a few days it will convenience me."

"And where are you going ?" cried Miss Fanny, with curiosity.

"I'll go first to my brother Patrick."

"It were to be wished he would give you some advice, but being a priest we could not expect it," said Miss Warbeck.

Alphonse, retreating, shut the door, and flew down the stairs. There was no leave-taking : she felt unequal to it ; and least of all before *la domestique* did she wish to exhibit

her emotions. The ladies looked at each other, and at the same moment they felt a simultaneous impulse urging them to explain, in their own justification, what appeared so odd. So the Misses Warbeck, who had till now very stiffly upheld their consequence by a haughty and distant reserve, thought it well to unbend and make a *confidante* of the menial who, with demure lips and scheming eyes, heard, well pleased, that Miss Alphonse had so grievously offended that she had forfeited all claim to the interest of her friends, who, permitting her henceforth to shift for herself, and her services dispensed with, as custodian of the tea, wine, sugar, and brandy, with the keeping of the weekly accounts, these offices which she had held with scrupulous exactness that left no opening for speculation, would in all probability, if not transferred to herself, devolve upon the stupid old ladies, to her own immense profit; for honesty, as she well knew Miss Alphonse had long since found out, was not one of her prominent virtues; and so, discarded by all, pitied by none, like one found guilty of some great crime, the young girl, after a few years' residence with her aunts, in comfort and luxury, went forth at duty's stern behest, to make her way as best she might, an outcast and a vagrant through the world. Once, indeed, Miss Fanny, who was of rather a softer nature than her sister, suggested:

"Perhaps, Sofy, we were wrong to have let her go away so—what will the world say? And she was useful in many ways to us."

"My dear Fanny," returned the inflexible Miss Warbeck, "it was the very best expedient we could have hit upon to bring her to her senses. One week's hardship and shifting for herself will cure her of her folly, take my word, and we shall have her coming back, contrite and humbled, like the prodigal son, to beg for the bread she had thrown away."

CHAPTER XII.

THE VICISSITUDES OF LIFE.

"This is no land of peace : unless that deep
And voiceless terror, which doth freeze men's thoughts.
Back to their source, and mantle its pale mien
With a dull, hollow semblance of repose
May so be called."

Vespers of Palermo.—HEMANS.

WHAT a host of retrospections is conjured by the theme, The Old Chapels of Dublin ! With how many sad and tender reminiscences are they not associated ? with what melancholy interest are they not invested ?

Old Whitefriar-street, Clarendon-street, the Franciscan and Dominican Chapels of Audeon-street and Cook-street, with many another venerable fane—what mournful, yet pleasing train of thought is awakened while contemplating those precincts, hallowed by human woe, whose consecrated pavements were once wet with the tears of generations gone by, and whose walls were betimes, too, anointed with holy blood.* If it be true, that an indefinable charm glorifies sites and places that have been the scene of events recorded in historic page, converting them into classic ground, not less true is it that traditionary lore imparts a magical glamour of its own, or perhaps it were more true to say, at least deem, that the spirits of the dead hovering near diffuse a solemn mystical atmosphere around each hoary shrine that hallows it with sublimity ; for, while musing upon the days gone by, when bruised hearts gave out their fragrance, and broken ones their unction ; when generous bosoms cheerfully offered noble self-sacrifice with the Holocaust of the altar, and faithful ones endured without a murmur the wreck of every earthly bliss and prospect, casting our eyes along the

* " In 1663, the Franciscan Chapel, Cook-street, was assailed on New Year's Day, by companies of soldiers with naked swords ; the altar was rifled, the priests carried to Newgate, and many of the congregation wounded and slain."—*Gilbert's Hist. Dublin.*

silent aisles, and now peaceful sanctuary, we ask where are they whose sighs once reverberated, filling the temple with deep, muffled echoes ; and we hear, as it were, a floating whisper in the dreamy air : we seem to feel conscious of the ethereal pulsation of impalpable, yet most sensible spiritual presence, encompassing our material being, as the atmosphere environs the earth, and with aerial lips breathing, " We are here," and an awe-struck reverence pervades our deep repose while we meditate and muse.

There are natures upon whom the shock of trouble, pain or misfortune, bereavement or disappointment fall roughly, and as roughly they meet it with loud clamour and outcry, while they wince and struggle beneath the burden, in vain effort to cast it off, and still so far achieve good that by their imploring lamentations they sometimes enlist a sympathising ear, or voice, or hand, to help them to sustain the load, or lighten it by their aid ; but there are others, who mutely bend their shoulders to the yoke imposed, and voiceless and uncomplaining pursue their way, broken and crushed, hopeless and disconsolate. To these belonged Alphonse Fitzpatrick. When she had left her aunts' house, she did not go at once as she had intended, to her brother's, but, pacing wearily along, heedless of the falling rain, she went into Whitefriar-street chapel to pour out before the altar the pent-up flood of her sorrow. Long she knelt, as it were in a trance ; for she could not collect her mind to pray, and the tears she came to weep unseen refused to flow, sealed up, as it were, in their source by the deadly, withering blight that had fallen upon her heart ; in passive apathy of spirit she knelt, while the hours glided by unnoticed. Nevertheless, though many a long-drawn sigh afforded no relief, there fell by-and-by a holy calm upon her aching bosom, lulling it to rest, and anon she rose, but feeling like one under the influence of some narcotic drug, stupefying sense and thought, she mechanically quitted the chapel, came into the street, and beckoned for a chaise, into which she stepped, directing the man to drive to the village of Lucan, where, having arrived in something more than an hour, she was set down by her directions, at what appeared to be a thatched barn,

but which was in reality the Roman Catholic Chapel. Father Fitzpatrick, the newly-appointed curate, just returned from a sick-call, had seated himself, breviary in hand, beside a little table in his one humble apartment, which was both sleeping and sitting-room, to say his office. He was a tall, slight, but muscular young man, of about three-and-thirty, with sedate, thoughtful type of countenance, marked by rather aquiline features, expressive gray eyes, and lank, black hair, falling backward from an ample forehead, bronzed by exposure to the weather; he had opened his book after throwing a couple of sods of turf upon the fire from a creel near the hearth, when a knock at the door interrupted him, and to his answer: "Come in," Alphonse gently opened, and stood within the threshold.

"Is it, indeed, you, my sister? Come in, I am very glad to see you, Alphonse," he exclaimed, rising and coming forward to greet her; "but what a day for you to come so far, child; I must feel the more obliged by your visit—but, but I'm afraid you're in trouble; why do you look so sad?"

"Well, indeed, Patrick, I cannot deny it," she said, endeavouring to smile, "and I thought I should feel better, at least bear it better, if I came to tell you about it."

"You did right, dear; sit down by the fire while I get you a glass of wine—some of that beautiful sherry you lately sent me." He stooped to extract a bottle of wine from a little cupboard in a corner with a wine glass, then rang a hand-bell to summon the old woman who attended him, to bring in some bread and butter and fresh eggs.

"Now, Alphonse," he said, seating himself before her and filling out a glass of wine, "take this and you will feel better. How are aunts?"

"Very well, Patrick; I have left them."

Father Fitzpatrick's eyes dilated, but he waited in silence for her to proceed.

"Yes, Patrick," she proceeded, "it is quite true. You know I was to have been married in the beginning of next month to Guildford Colandisk. Well, it's all broken off."

And now it seemed as though tears were finding their way, for her bosom heaved, and her voice grew unsteady. "You know Uncle Jeremiah is dead," she sighed.

"I did not know it," responded Father Fitzpatrick, "go on."

"Well, he left me a large fortune, Patrick—only think, fifty thousand pounds—upon condition that I should conform, within one month, to the Church of England, and you know I couldn't do that."

"Of course not," returned her brother.

"Well, Patrick," she resumed, now fairly sobbing, "Guildford was so disappointed, he declared off. I ought not to be so sorry, perhaps, for that; for I begin to think you were right when you said you did not like the match; and yet, I can't help saying I loved him. I did, indeed; for I had believed he was fond of me, and I thought we should have lived so happily. Now it is all ended—my silly dream. But what's perhaps worse is that Uncle Jeremiah did not leave aunts the usual stipend to keep me, and so I have to go."

"My poor, poor child, don't cry so."

Father Fitzpatrick made soothing response, while his own downcast eyes seemed absorbed in deepest pondering.

"See, Alphonse, things may not be so dark as their aspect at first shows. In the first place, if he really love you, Colandisk, when the effervescence of his, I must say, unmanly temper has subsided, will return penitent to sue your forgiveness. If he do not, take it on faith that you have been deceived by his professions; that his love was balanced between you and Mammon, and that lucre preponderated. If such prove to be the case, no amount of congratulation can exaggerate the felicity of your escape from such an alliance. As to aunts, I'm sure, though I believe in their anger, they never will see the child they have reared for so long quit the shelter of their roof, or want for any necessary. You have only to bear with them till the storm blow over and the sun shines out again."

"I should have thought the same, Patrick," she said, "but they took care I should not be so mistaken. They said they could not keep me; that I should make out

for myself. Oh, Patrick, my faith in human hearts is all gone!"

"All gone?" smiled the priest, with significant appeal.

Alphonse corrected herself: "No, I don't mean so; no day will come that shall see my trust in you shaken, Patrick. But I fear me there are but few in which truth is a—I don't know that if Guildford came back now I could love him as once I did."

"But tell me this, Alphonse," resumed her brother, gravely, "let me understand you rightly—for though I know well, none should know better, how bigotry hardens the heart, and warps the human mind—never, at least I shall find it difficult to believe that our aunts have actually denied you their support and protection. You must have misunderstood them; taken up too literally a sentence spoken in the heat of the moment, which ought to be excused—is it not so? For though bigotry may rank with avarice in its vile tendency to outrage all natural instincts, I shall not believe anything so monstrous of our relatives, that they could have fallen so low into the abyss."

"I fear they have, Patrick; there was a hard, uncompromising look in the face of aunt Sophy when she told me I should shift for myself, that made me feel she meant it; and you know they never say anything in a passion, which makes all the more inflexible what they do say. I do not think I could bring myself now to ask them for one night's shelter, or that I could endure again from them many things I have suffered; because hope was before me then, and at least I was with them on an independent footing, not as I should henceforth be, an abject dependant."

"And, my poor child, what do you mean to do? I would not ask the question if I knew how to help you," said Father Fitzpatrick, with deep pathos in his tone, while he cast, for the first time, a dissatisfied look around the four bare walls and scanty furniture of his one poor room. Her swift perception saw what was passing in his mind; quickly she made response: "Oh, Patrick, don't concern yourself about me, I'll make it out; there's nurse Lanigan I can go to for a night or two, if necessary. But

more ; you know I am a good performer on the harp and piano : I can play and sing well. Now, teachers in those accomplishments—good ones, are very scarce. I know aunts' friends, the Misses Hodgens, have been long seeking for a resident teacher, I will offer myself, and feel pretty sure I shall be accepted.

"God direct and prosper you, dear. But tell me, how are you off for money ?" he added, taking out his purse. "I have not yet broken your last present of three guineas ;—yes, by-the-by, I forgot ; I changed one to give five shillings to a poor widow, whose children were in the measles, and who lost a week's work in consequence ; but here is the remainder."

Alphonse shook her head and finger at him in playful rebuke. "Very good, sir ; this is the way the money goes I intended for your own wants and comfort. I'm afraid you'll have henceforth to be more prudent in your expenditure, seeing the spring has ran dry." He smiled.

"My wants are few, and easily supplied, sis ; and you afforded me great comfort so long as you enabled me, by your generosity, to alleviate the wants of others. But won't you take this ?"

"No, sir ; I never resume a gift, I have enough for present requirements ; but I wish you were in Dublin, near me, it would be such a consolation."

"I know it would, Alphonse ; but my place in the vineyard has been appointed here, and it is a labour of sorrow." He murmured, parenthetically, half aloud.

"Yes, it seems to be a poor place," she observed, putting on her gloves.

"Tis not that I mean," he answered, sorrowfully ; "if the creatures were left in peace to earn their scanty bread by the sweat of their brow, and to die in peace in the wretched hovels which infamous oppression and wealth wrung from injustice and plunder, has permitted to be the sole shelter of man and beast alike, I should not complain ; but when to this I behold added stripes too detestable for slaves, cruelties that would shame savages, wantonly perpetrated upon an unoffending people, the innocent *made* the victims of revolting crime, and calumnies in-

vented to sanction their destruction, my blood boils, my whole being is shaken with tumultuous ire. God pardon my weak human nature, but I feel as though I could wrathfully stand questioning his divine omnipotence—why is it so? Have we sinned beyond forgiveness, and been, therefore, delivered over to the ministers of hell to wreak upon us their malice?—Else, are there no thunderbolts in Thy hand to smite the persecutors to the dust! Such are the wild thoughts that career through my brain, till, like soft descending dew falling upon and slaking the fire of my soul, arise in the dark and dreary hour the vision of a thorn-crowned Man bending beneath the burden of a cross, beckoning us to follow upon the blood-stained track to the bourn where a bitter death shall bear testimony to his immortal divinity. Then—then I am calm again; the question which philosophy could not solve is made plain, and I bow down my head and say, ‘Thy will be done.’”

“Yet,” said Alphonse, “one may question human motives. What can be the meaning of the terrible persecution now being inflicted upon the country at large by the Government and those in power? They must have some object in it; it is too systematic to be imputed to the mere caprice of the strong venting their passions upon the weak; were it but that one might hope for some respite.”

“Time alone can tell. Some intelligent persons with whom I have conversed are of opinion the Government has some ulterior project on foot, which Camden and Castle-reagh are aiding to carry out by atrocious means. Some say they are mooting the question of a union between the countries; but if they be, that’s a bad way to set about it, and I don’t understand why a proposition to be settled by Parliament has anything to do with goading the people. Others think it is intended to inaugurate another raid of extermination upon the old race and creed; heaven knows, brought low enough. Whatever it is, Lord Carhampton down here is playing the part of Diocletian. The poor widow I told you of was the wife of a labourer—one of seven or eight he had shot a few weeks ago for resisting his outrages upon their families; and because our virtuous pea-

santry have the manliness to rise against profligacy which, if tamely borne, would make us acquainted with the days of Caligula, Nero, and the worst of the Roman emperors, they are stigmatised and punished as rebels."

"That is very hard," said Alphonse; "are you not acquainted with Lord Castlereagh; could you not see him or memorial him upon the subject?"

"Castlereagh and I were fellow-collegians and intimates, notwithstanding the disparity of our years—in sooth, I was his fag; nevertheless, he was a fellow I liked in some way, and used to propitiate with ample dividends of the liberal allowance made me by Uncle Jeremiah till he left college. Oh, yes; many a boyish mischief also we planned and got into together, and I was myself such a wild chap, that the most hazardous enterprise suggested was ever that surest to meet my ready co-operation, even where spirits daring enough paused to weigh the risk; somehow I used to pull through, not only that, but take upon myself the penalties attached to the failure of my companions' freaks, thereby rendering myself vastly popular, though I believe in my soul they thought the 'Wild Irish Boy,' as they were wont to term me, a fool; strange, I was proud too of my sobriquet, and nothing more delighted me than to feel that I had merited it. Did I ever tell you the adventure Castlereagh and I got into with lot more about the apples?"

"No," said Alphonse, beguiled into temporary oblivion of care by the conversation of her brother, who, smiling, continued:

"I believe, that from the time Adam sinned in eating the apple the curse of a taste for that particular fruit has been entailed on all his male descendants, involving their juvenile years in more transgression and trouble than all other temptations put together; at least, I feel quite certain that the idea of plundering the most accessible hot-house of the choicest peaches or grapes would never have entered our minds, while the mad project of scaling some fortified wall to capture a booty of apples (if they were green enough to set our teeth on edge, and twist our faces out of shape, it made no matter), used to engage our liveliest atten-

tion and intellectual powers for days. Now it happened that in proximity to the college there was one of those nuisances, a large well-fenced and well-guarded orchard, owned by an old scrub, who hated schoolboys with a most virulent antipathy, and wouldn't part with one of his precious hoard to save a life but for its worth in cash—had that fellow been custodian of the garden of Eden, Eve wouldn't have found it so easy to yield to temptation; at any rate, that orchard was an eyesore to us, and a bane to our peace, particularly in the autumn, when the fruit began to show its richest mellow tint of gold and crimson, we used to look in each other's eyes to read each other's thoughts upon the subject. At length we expressed our ideas.

"'Those are fine apples, yonder,' said one of the lads, as we stood panting and heated after a game of cricket; 'I wish we had some.'

"'What's the use of wishing, Tom Sadlier,' cried another, 'old Pluto would see us in Styx before he'd give us one; go down to Nancy Hall's shop and buy some.'

"'Go yourself,' said Tom, who was not liberal-minded.

"'I wish we had some, wherever they came from?' said my chum, looking at me.

"'Then come along, Steward,' said I, 'what's the good of wishing? there's too many apples in that garden, an' 'twill be a good thing to lighten the trees.'

"'How'll we do it?' said Steward. 'Cut a hole in the hedge with our clasp knives,' said I. 'We'll be taken up for thieves,' said he. 'Never fear,' said I, 'come on.' We set to work, made an entry, got in, commenced our depredations—eating in haste, and laying in a supply for future consumption, by throwing them in dozens across the hedge. So far so well, our task was accomplished, and we were returning satiated, when, behold! we were electrified at sight of old Scrubs, bearing down upon us as yet happily unconscious of the state of affairs.

"'Oh, Lord, what'll we do,' cried Steward, aghast.

"'Let's bolt,' exclaimed Sadlier, with eyes leaping out of his head. 'That won't save us,' groaned another.

"'Hang you! Fitzpatrick, this is your doing! we'll be expelled,' cried Steward, white as a sheet.

“‘Look here,’ said I, ‘don’t be such a confounded sneak. There’s Scrub smelling a rose; I’ll go up and speak to him, things can’t be worse than they are; when you see his back turned, fly every one of you, pick up the bits of the hedge and the apples at the other side, and make off.’ With that I broke cover, running as it were out of breath up to my man, who stared with mouth and eyes agape at the apparition of a boy of fourteen rushing through his well-fenced orchard.

“‘Hollo!’ he called, when I got half way. ‘What do you want my lad, how did you get here?’

“‘May I go after him, sir?’ I shouted, running past him like one demented. ‘May I catch him?’

“‘Catch what?’ yelled Scrubs, running after me.

“‘A fox, sir, a fox,’ shouted I, in full chase. ‘Stop, stop, boy, a fox in my ground!—how did he get in?’ shrieked Scrubs, straining his stiff old sinews to keep up with my supple young legs. ‘Which way did he go? How did he get in? Call the gardener?’ Well, suffice to say, that by the time I had run the Cerberus of the Hesperides out of breath, and far away from my companions, who I knew had good time to effect an orderly retreat, I came to a standstill, and looking terribly disappointed, I said:

“‘I’m afraid he’s escaped, sir.’

“‘You didn’t expect to catch a fox, young man, by runnin’ arter him?’ said the gardener, who had by this time come up with two or three workmen.

“‘If he hadn’t outrun me of course I could,’ exclaimed I, looking injured innocence at the fellow, applying himself to digest the pith of my answer with a most stolid visage.

“‘But how did he get in?’ queried the more intelligent master.

“‘Through the hole in the hedge,’ cried I.

“‘I didn’t think there was a hole in my hedge,’ cried Scrubs, looking reproachfully at the gardener, who scratched his head, and said:

“‘He’d be danged if he thought there wor.’

“‘Come, and see it?’ said I; ‘a great big hole a carriage could go through!’ Away we all trooped to the spot.

“‘Is this little ’ere ole wot yer say a corridge could go thro’, yer yong limber tongue?’ wrathfully cried the gardener, pointing to the small aperture over which my companions had drawn some branches to meet.

“‘Well, all I can tell you is,’ expostulated I, ‘a fox could go through it, and I got through it quite easily.’

“‘And do yer set yerself up to be as big as a coach?’ sneered the gardener. ‘Yer ought to larn to speak trooth, my lad.’

“‘At any rate!’ cried Scrubs, ‘that fox must be trapped. We must get a gin here; see how he has cut away all the hedge. Hoot! one would think his teeth were knives, he has cut so clean; any way, I’m glad we’ve got scent of him, or there’s no knowing the amount of damage he’d have done. Come, boy, and I’ll let you out through the hall-door.’

“‘Never mind, sir,’ said I, ‘don’t take the trouble; I may as well go this way now as it’s open. What fine apples those are of yours!’

“‘Yes, the very finest in the country; you shall have one when we are gathering them in next month.’

“‘Thank ye, sir,’ said I; and off I went, hearing him say, ‘that he thought the trees looked thinner than they did,’ which I could have accounted for; but, would you believe, Alphonse, when I got home the greedy curmudgeons had shared all the apples among them; didn’t keep one for me to reward the dexterity with which I had extricated them from jeopardy. In sooth, I’ve had but a poor opinion of English spirit ever since; and as for Castlereagh, erewhile Steward—though a couple of years after wards we parted company—I know enough of his antecedents and his character not to encourage me to renew acquaintance or hope for any favour in that quarter, unless I held in my hand some bribe worth his acceptance. Men, I ween, are the embryo of what they shall blossom and fruit, in the cradle—but are you going?’

“Yes, Patrick; I must call, when I arrive in Dublin, upon the Misses Hodgens; it is better not delay.”

“Be it so, dear,” said Father Fitzpatrick, rising also as she stood up to go—sad, but composed. Write to let me

know how you speed, as I shall be anxious about you ; and bear in mind, never is God so near us as in the hour of affliction : but in this world some suffering we must have. What ballast is to the ship, the cross, come in what form it may, is ballast to the soul, steadying its career from port to port through the storm-tossed ocean of life, whereon, if not weighted in its buoyant course, it would drift at random to destruction. Bless you !—Farewell ! I would return with you and call on the Misses Warbeck if I thought my intervention would be of any avail,” he added, after a pause, and with an interrogating look.

She quickly returned : “Not the least use, Patrick ; I know aunts better than you do. You would but expose yourself to insult and me to pain ; don’t fear, I shall make out for myself, and if I get into any dilemma you shall have timely notice. Adieu ! I feel better for my chat with you ; not so despondent.”

They embraced ; he saw her to the chaise which had been waiting, and put the fare into the coachman’s hand, despite a deprecating look from her as she drove off. Arrived in town, Alphonse’s first business was to call on the Misses Hodgens, to whom, without preface, she entered upon the subject of her visit, succinctly detailing the circumstances that now rendered it necessary for her to employ her talents in her own behalf. The family were assembled in conclave, recruiting their energies with a glass of punch after dinner, the children’s recreation time, when Alphonse, who had herself been for a couple of years a day pupil, and a favourite one, as she had been well paid for, was admitted to the divan prior to their initiation of the state of affairs, and deeming that she was the bearer, as often before, of an invitation to tea to the Misses Warbeck ; so, after a blank interregnum of silence, when the real state of the case was revealed, Mrs. Hodgens, mixing a glass of spirits with some white sugar in her tumbler, said :

“And wasn’t it rather obstinate of you, my dear, to offend your good aunts and blight your worldly prospects by refusing to obey the call of grace ? I don’t at all wonder at their having turned you out of their house.”

Alphonse, hanging her head in silence, Miss Hodgens took upon herself to say, "she did not think that, under the circumstances, they would be justified in harbouring a young person who had displeased her relatives; that it would be giving bad example, and encouraging a breach of the fourth commandment."

Miss Medicott, squeezing a lemon into her negus, as she called it, to sharpen the flavour, observed: "That the Lord always set his face against unduteous children, and soon or late poured out upon them the phial of his wrath; and that no blessing could fall upon a house defiled with the abomination of Popery."

Miss Jemima, who, being the youngest of the family, was sometimes apostrophised by the endearing and infantile epithet of "Baby," prettily suggested, "that as they were in want of a music-teacher, if Miss Fitzpatrick would, considering all the disadvantages against her, be satisfied to give her services gratuitously, it might, perhaps, be not amiss to offer her an asylum. They had a spare garret-room, and the bit she eat would not signify."

"*Pro tempo*," returned Miss Medicott, whose mind suddenly became liberal at the idea of saving fifty pounds per annum, "'t isn't a bad notion, child. What do you say, Ruth?"

Mrs. Hodgens, who was equally alive to the advantage of driving a good bargain, looked inquiringly at her eldest daughter.

"Fact is," said Miss Hodgens, striving to disguise a surreptitious smile of satisfaction, "if we were independent enough, of necessity, it is not a thing I would like to do; but, as 'Baby' remarks, as we are in want of a teacher, and if Miss Fitzpatrick choose to accept the terms proposed, and not be too exacting about her diet, and will make herself generally useful, perhaps we might venture to harbour her *pro tempo*, as Aunt Tabby suggests. What do you say, Miss Fitzpatrick?"

"For a while I shall be glad to accept your terms, Miss Hodgens," said Alphonse, glad of the conclusion to which they had come, and too tutored by experience—one day's experience, to wonder at any *eclaircissement* of narrow-

mindfulness, sordid character, or callous feeling that might have shocked or astonished a novice.

"Oh, that won't do! you must bind yourself for a quarter at least," said Miss Hodgens, peremptorily.

"Just as you please," said Alphonse, with an abstracted air. "When shall I come?"

"To-morrow, without fail. You can send your trunk, if you wish, to-night."

"Thank you, perhaps I may," she answered, preparing to go, as she had not been asked to partake of any hospitality; and from the altered tone and manner of the ladies it was made evident that in future all intercourse between them should be regulated by the scale of that subsisting between mistress and servant. Disheartened and dejected the disinherited heiress took leave of her employers, and set off, just as night was closing in, rainy and wintry, to seek a night's shelter beneath the humble roof of her nurse.

In the time anterior to the Union, and the influx of English civilisation and morality, it is a notorious fact that the attachment and fidelity, respect and reverence of servants to their families was remarkable and universal. To-day the case is reversed; butchery, persecution, and famine having at length done their work, and all but exterminated the old Celtic population, propelling the exodus by hundreds of thousands to found new homes (the seed of cities and future empires) in the transatlantic hemisphere. In their stead we have substituted a class whose indigenous vices and propensity to theft, deceit, drunkenness, insolence, lying, profligacy, and to defame, and in many instance to assault and murder their masters, make us wish to have back again some of our banished emigrants. But in vain; they have shaken the dust of the land into which they were trampled and crushed from their feet, and carried their blessing to other shores.

In a small back room of Little Mary-street, an elderly woman (one of the best type of those whose loss we have so much reason to deplore) was standing at a deal table kneading dough for a cake. In figure, she was of average

height, but thin and spare to a fault; her features too, were small and sharply cut, imparting rather a severe expression to her countenance, while high cheek bones and lively dark eyes gave it a marked character; her own grey hair she wore in little clumpy curls, beneath the border of a clean net cap, tied with a brown ribbon under her chin; a gown of a dark-blue cotton, of hailstone pattern, and a clean check apron, with a little gaudy-coloured handkerchief pinned across her bosom, completed her outward attire. Three or four children stood round her, the eldest about eight years old, poorly clad, but neat and clean, watching with much interest the progress of the cake, and one urchin even venturing a modest request:

"Gran, will ye gi' me a little cake for myself?"

To which another dissented, crying: "No, Johnny, you had it last time; it's me now."

"Come, be aisy, an' I'll give ye cakes a piece. Here, Johnny; here, Biddy. Musha, God help 'em for innocents," continued the grandmother, breaking off a piece of dough for each; and turning to a young woman sitting at the fire blowing under the kettle, "they think a cake made by themselves will eat sweeter than any other. Ye might move the kettle to one side, Esther, an' get on the griddle."

Esther, a good-looking young woman, obeyed, and as she did so said, in a strong Tipperary accent like her mother: "Why, thin, mother, I'm thinkin' it might be the best thing Mick and I could do, for him to go down to the brother in Wicklow, an' help at the forge, for good a hand as he is at the stone-cuttin', sorra much good he'll do afther the thratement Beresford's bloodhounds put on him in Marlborough-street; an shure we can't wondher the heart is bruk widin him—a dacent, onoffendin' man—to be treated afther the fashion, and a'most kilt."

"True for you, Esther honey," returned Mrs. Lanigan. "But see, *aroon*, how lonesome I'll be whin yiz are gone; an' only I earn purty well at the stichin', an' Miss Alphonse says whin she's marrid she'll give me a comfortable home, an' take yer little Kitty to thrain to be useful

to her, I'd go wid ye in a jiffy, an' try my fortin, more especial as my brother Dan is gone to the same place. Whist! there's a knock at the door. Kitty, *alanna*, run an' see who's at it."

The child opened the door, and Alphonse, cold and wet, walked in, saying :

"Nurse, I'm come to ask you for a bed to-night; can you make me out one. I know you have not room yourself, but could you hire a cheap, decent lodging for me for the night. How are you, Esther,? I'm glad to see you; and how are the wee folk?"

"Why, thin, Miss Alphonse jewel, what's the meaning of it at all at all, or is it only a joke yer playin' off on poor ould Nona?" exclaimed Mrs. Lanigan, stopping, and lifting her hands, clogged with dough, in her great surprise at seeing such a visitor at such an hour; but Esther, observing the plight of the latter more than herself, said :

"Musha, she's wet to the skin, mother, an' tired more betoken. Come in, miss, an' take an air of the fire, an' let me take off yer wet things. Roon away, childer, an' bake yer cakes, an' don't be starin' so unmannerly."

"Thank you, Esther," said Alphonse, with a sigh of relief; "I'm so glad to get to the fire, and to throw off my wet pelisse. How's Mick?"

But instead of answering the question, Mrs. Lanigan, after putting the cake on the fire, and hunting the children out to play in the passage, turned to Alphonse, and said in kindly coaxing accents, yet with evidently perturbed aspect :

"Now, *avourneen*, tell yer own Nona what she can do for ye?"

"Would Mick be so kind as to call to the house in Talbot-street for my trunks?" asked Alphonse.

"Of course he will, *acushla*, an' proud; but if it isn't making too bould to ax, sure it isn't runnin' away wid Mr. Guildford you'd be?" exclaimed Nona, with a touch of anxiety in her voice.

Alphonse reassured her, saying cheerfully : "No, indeed, Nona; but I've left my aunts."

"Left your aunts, my *colleen dhas*. An' where are you goin'?"

"To service," replied Alphonse; and steeped as she was in sorrow, she could not help laughing at the terrified looks of Esther and her mother as they solemnly reiterated her words.

"To sarvice!"

"Well yes, in its way; I'm engaged to teach music in the Misses Hodgens' school," she said, and in a few words she explained to them the reasons for the step, to which after they had listened patiently they relieved their feelings.

Mrs. Lanigan, "Bad cess to the ould vixens, an' may they be behoulden to want a shelther an' a friend in their ould age, to stan' by 'em, I pray God, Amin."

"Whisht mother, don't curse anyone—curses like crows, I hear Father Fitzpatrick say, coom home to roost—their own feelins 'ill be curse enough, barrin they've none. I hope Miss, *alanna*, ye've med thim school missusses given ye the vally o' yer attintion?" she would not demean Miss Alphonse by the word service.

"Oh, yes, Esther, as much as I could expect; I'm engaged but for one quarter, and that will give me time to look about me," and as she spoke, the door opened, and a young man of sullen aspect, in the garb of a mason or stonecutter, came in; he seemed surprised at first, seeing Alphonse, but soon correcting himself, he said, touching his forehead with every mark of respect:

"Good evenin', Miss; I'm glad to see ye, I hope yer well?"

"Good evening, Mick Mooney, I'm glad to see you," said Alphonse. "Will you kindly do me a favour?"

"Troth, I will, Miss, barrin it's to walk on my head, or somethin' onpossible; many's the good turn I an' mine are beholden to ye, may ye niver want a frind yerself."

Then, Alphonse, thanking him, mentioned her request, and without another word, Mick Mooney set off to call at Talbot-street for her trunks, while Alphonse, his wife, and mother-in-law had their tea, and discussing their respective misfortunes, lightened them by sympathising in each other's

grief, and took counsel with each other for their future guidance—Mrs. Lanigan having sometime secured for a trifle, which she never owned to, the lend of a neat little bedroom, next to her own, for her foster-child.

CHAPTER XIII.

MAJOR SIRR'S QUEST AND ITS CONSEQUENCE.

"Could bruised hands crush the brazen throat of might,
We should not wield the distaff but the lance;
Could tears and prayers dispel the living night,
The heavens should quake and yield deliverance."

CAVIARE.

"I tell thee that a spirit is abroad,
Which will not slumber till its path be traced
By deeds of fearful fame."

Vespers of Palermo.—HEMANS.

A few days had elapsed since the visit of Hugh O'Byrne, and Euphemia soon experienced very practical benefit from its result, the fact being, that combined with his gracious manner and fine appearance, he had actually commended himself to the favour—we shall waive the hacknied term, and say, made an impression upon the heart of Miss Hodgens, fast waning in her meridian without ever once having been flattered by even the supposition that she had awakened the least tendency to amatory interest in any male bosom—the notion had suddenly seized her like an inspiration, that even a Popish husband might be preferable to single blessedness; and might it not be worth her while to lay herself out to besyren and capture a prey, which though of colossal dimensions, was evidently a soft, amiable monster; so in view of the anticipated project, her tactics changed, and Euphemia quite appreciated the relaxation of the penal code under which she had so long suffered. Yet far from guessing the cause of her ameliorated condition, which she entirely imputed to her brother's perhaps implied intention of removing her if she were not more justly treated, she availed

herself of the blessing, without being at all imposed upon to feel the smallest gratitude to her preceptresses for the same. To-day, indeed—it was again Friday—she had come into collision with the whole Hodgens' phalanx, by stoutly refusing to have her dinner with the rest of the pupils, even though tempted by the promise of fried sole, protesting she would dine, as she always did, with Kitty, else she would eat no dinner at all. So, even though she carried her point, and the mistresses had capitulated with a bad grace, there was smothered war between each party; and, in no conciliatory mood, late in the afternoon she sauntered, tired of striving to beguile her companions to play, into the school-room, skipping-rope in hand, to exchange it for the "Adventures of Sinbad the Sailor;" but just as she crossed the threshold she stood still, at sight of a young lady, a stranger, sitting alone upon one of the benches. After a brief inspection, Euphemia accosted her:

"Are you a new pupil?"

"No," returned the lady; "I am a governess."

"You look very young to be a governess;—what are you to teach?"

"Music."

"I'm sorry for that, for I'll not be in your class then."

"Don't you learn music?"

"No; I don't think Miles and Hugh are rich enough to get me taught music. What's your name?"

"Alphonse Fitzpatrick. What's yours?"

"Effie O'Byrne."

"You are a Catholic?"

"Yes, of course;—are you?"

"I am."

"Then, you're the only one in the house, except me and Kitty?"

"Who is Kitty?"

"The cook."

"Do you like the Misses Hodgens?"

Euphemia made a grimace, and before she could frame a response suitable to convey in adequate terms the expression of her dislike, Miss Hodgens entered. Glancing sharply around, she exclaimed:

"Why aren't you out playing, Euphemia? Recreation time is just over."

"I came in, because I could get no one to play with me," returned Euphemia, bluntly.

"That's because they were offended that you wouldn't dine with them."

"It was not, Miss Hodgens," cried unwary Euphemia, eager to rectify such an error. "I heard Bessy Jones whisper to Nanny Dunne that Miss Medlicott told them not to play with me."

"Oh, you mistake, child; go sit down till I ask Miss Medlicott about it;—and see, see, Effie, just write your brother Hugh's address on that note for me: I have asked him to dine with us on Sunday."

"Hugh won't like to dine with a lot of children!" exclaimed Euphemia, flaring up like a rocket.

Alphonse Fitzpatrick could not repress a silent laugh; but Miss Hodgens, smiling, said:

"Of course, not, my pet; I don't mean it. We shall have some nice company: the Rev. Mr. Lamb; the Pomfrets—a delightful family, quite the fashion—the Damers—you know Caroline was finished here;—also Lady Alicia Luttrell, Squire Higgins, and others. I'm afraid we may not have much room; but if I can squeeze out a corner for you next myself I will."

This was a programme that quite satisfied Euphemia. In very mollified temper, she took the letter and placed herself at a desk; yet, pen in hand, she lingered, still surveying the stranger, whom Miss Hodgens now addressed haughtily:

"Miss Fitzpatrick, you may as well set to work at once."—Alphonse had risen and was standing.—"Miss Jane Hoey is to learn a set of quadrilles on the piano, Miss Rose Fox a waltz, and the Misses Todd a duet on the harp."

"And, my dear," interposed Miss Medlicott, who had just stepped in, with a stocking she was darning on her wrist, "if you would put your hair up under a little cap; the pupils won't respect you if you don't look older than themselves, and have some badge to mark your superiority."

"And," added Miss Jemima, who had followed with her mother, "don't you think, ma'am, pink muslin is too showy a colour for——"

"Certainly, Jemmy," interrupted Mrs. Hodgens; "pink, blue, lilac, white, are all more adapted to children. Miss Fitzpatrick will see herself the impropriety of a music-teacher dressing in showy colours, suitable at best only for young ladies of fortune; and you must get some quiet dress to appear in, Miss Fitzpatrick."

"You know I shall have to get black," sighed Alphonse.

"Yes; that's true," said Miss Hodgens; "yet, doesn't it seem great duplicity to put on mourning for those who have not acted up to our hopes and expectations?"

"Where principle is not compromised," said Alphonse, "we often have, in deference to etiquette and the world, to affect appearances that might lay us open to the imputation of insincerity; yet I cannot say in my case, mourning is not genuine, since I have reason to deplore the loss of a relative who had long been so kind to me."

"That's true; more fool you to have disobeyed his wishes," returned Mrs. Hodgens, leaving the room with the salutary comment.

Miss Medlicott walked after her, soliloquising: "Yea, verily, anathema shall be their portion who render worship to idols, and despise the ways of the godly."

Miss Jemima followed Miss Medlicott, saying: "Ma, I think I'll go to Nichol's and order home that pretty crepelise and amber-satin bonnet I have taken such a fancy to."

Miss Hodgens travelled after Jemima to summon the music pupils. Alphonse sat down again. When the heart has sustained an acute affliction, whether in the bereavement by death of a beloved friend, or, perhaps, the yet more poignant anguish of the dereliction of one in whose friendship, love, and truth we had confided with a trust firm as adamant, it seems as though fate had done her worst, and it becomes, as it were, impassive, callous, and apathetic to shocks of pain or emotion that would at another time have probed its sensibilities to the

quick ; hence it was that hers did not heave and swell indignant at being treated with contumely and heartless disdain by those from whom she ought to have had every reason to expect the utmost kindness and consideration. The Misses Hodgens she had ever made welcome to her aunt's house ; she had sat upon their knee a caressed and petted child. Many a pretty *cadeau* had passed from her own hand to theirs ; and now she did not feel exasperated, or stung, or scornful ; but she was miserable, disconsolate, pale, silent, unutterably wretched : she mused wearily and brooded dejected over her altered lot—so wearily, that she heeded not Euphemia hovering near, till the child's hand rested on her shoulder, and the child's voice fell upon her ear, saying :

"Don't be fretting. I was fool enough to cry when I first came, but you'll get used to it. How like a brood of ducks they all waddled one after another out of the room ;—and you know they can't slap and beat you, and you have no lessons to learn, at any rate."

Blessed power of human sympathy, let it come in what form it may, from what untutored lips, or in what language uttered, it falls like heaven's own dew upon the arid breast, soothing and softening its barren sterility, and casting a seed into the furrow ploughed up by grief. Alphonse's first impulse was to press to her quivering lips the small hand she had taken in hers ; with a sense of gratitude ; then, as suddenly she dropped it, and turned away with cold, averted brow, thinking :

"You, too, will deceive like others : there is no stability in the inconstant human heart ; fast as they bloom, its flowers wither, scarcely one ever fruits ; and if I seek to garner any more I shall deserve to be disappointed."

Euphemia stared, thinking her very queer, yet sorry for her somehow ; then, not knowing what else to say or do, she took up her rope and skipped out of the room.

The music lessons soon commenced, and Alphonse drudged at her task till nightfall, when the bell summoned the school to tea, prayers, and bed, consecutively. Euphemia was seated at the tea-table among her companions, and took little notice of her. Mugs of milk and water,

very slightly sweetened, with plates of bread and salt butter were laid for each one: the governess was appointed a cup and saucer, to make distinction. The Misses Hodgens had already had their own tea with their mother, so their sitting down was merely a make-show. Alphonse had partaken of but little food that day, and still her heart was too full and too sore for her to feel any inclination for even more appetising fare; so she sat playing with her spoon, alternately glancing at each of the children, but oftenest at Euphemia, vigorously making way through a pretty thick piece of bread and butter. Suddenly their eyes encountered, and Euphemia, with distended cheeks, contrived to exclaim aloud:

"Miss Fitzpatrick isn't eating anything."

"Silence, Miss! How dare you speak!" cried Miss Jemima, who was not in good temper, the bonnet she had set her heart upon having been carried off by a prior customer.

"I don't want to speak, only to say that Miss Fitzpatrick is eating nothing."

"Hold your tongue! What's that to you? If Miss Fitzpatrick isn't a cormorant like you, so much the better."

"I want more bread and butter, please," intimated Euphemia, rolling up her eyes, as she stuffed the last bit into her mouth, and she ignored the chiding look that accompanied the plate by a deep dive into her mug. Alphonse thought, as she stood up with all the rest after tea, "That's a sturdy child, but she has some feeling in her, at any rate." So she glided over and whispered: "What are we going to do, now that all these are going to read the Bible and prayers?"

"I believe it's expected we go up to bed; but I go down to Kitty;—will you come? She'll be very glad to see you."

Alphonse declined the invitation, and went up to the room to which she had been shown as hers—a garret opposite Euphemia's. Here, having arranged her things, said her night prayers, and sat long in melancholy rumination, she heard the clock strike eleven before the darkness

warned her it was time for rest. Chilled, and feeling weak for want of food, though not hungry, she rose shivering, and undressed, but had scarcely laid her head on the pillow when she was startled in her loneliness and sense of abandonment by hearing a knock at the door.

"Come in," she called out, and Euphemia entered, with a tallow candle in one hand and a huge cat under her arm in the other.

"Here, Miss Fitzpatrick; I was afraid you'd be asleep, and I've brought you a cat."

"A cat! For what, dear? I don't like a cat in my room," said Alphonse, sitting up and looking in some wonder at the self-complacent Euphemia, who replied, in a tone of decision:

"Oh, yes, Miss Fitzpatrick, I thought you'd be frightened with the rats, so I brought the cat;—it's my own cat, that Kitty got for me, and she's very quiet, and will just lie at your back and keep you warm; and she's a fine mouser, so don't be frightened if you hear her after them. I'm used to them now; so I'm not so much afraid;—and Kitty's going to bring you a hot cup of tea—of real tea. I told her what hogwash they gave you, and that you wouldn't eat the stale bread and salt butter; so she's made a hot cake;—an' good-night now, I hear her coming; an' don't let on to the housemaid, lest she'd tell Miss Hodgens an' get Kitty scolded."

Alphonse listened, gazing upon the voluble child like one trance-bound; but she had no time to make any response before Kitty entered, asking her pardon, with a courtesy, for the liberty she was taking, same time laying before her a little tray with tea, hot cake, and a little broiled meat, which had now become most acceptable. Yet, deeply moved as she was, and grateful for the unexpected manifestation of so much kindness, she could not move herself to any demonstrative expression, and feeling with shame how cold and tepid were her best thanks, and humiliated with the sense, new to her, of being the recipient, instead of the bestower of bounty, she partook of the grateful sustenance, dismissed the cook with acknowledgments; then, when alone again in the darkness and

solitude of her chamber, she gave free course to her tears, and wept long and bitterly. The following morning she was awake early, and up and dressed before any of the pupils had come down. She wished to meet Euphemia, to thank her again for her kind attention of the preceding night, yet, with a morbid shrinking of the seared heart, she checked the impulse that would have led her to seek her before she had left her room, while feeling, but not daring to admit even, to herself, the hold the child was taking upon her interest, and striving to banish her image, which, somehow, was ever pertinaciously obtruding itself before her. By-and-by some of the pupils came to the music-room, and in the distraction of lines and spaces, semi-breves, and demi-semibreves, she for a time lost sight of every other thought till the breakfast-bell rang. At the welcome sound, away dashed the pupils from the pianos, and Alphonse, rising to follow, stood still a moment with surprise to look at Euphemia, who had glided in unobserved, sitting in the window, in rather masculine attitude—that is to say, a foot crossed over one knee, which she held in her hand, while she pored with every indication of absorbed attention over a book in the other; she accosted her, after a second or two :

"There's the bell, Effie;—what are you reading?"

"'The Adventures of Robinson Crusoe.' It's the nicest story. Did you ever read it, Miss Fitzpatrick?"

"Yes; my brother lent it to me when I was a little girl. Where did you get it?"

"Ned Burke gave it to me."

"Who is Ned Burke, dear?"

"Kitty's son: a very nice, good boy I've got acquainted with. He brought it to me last night, an' bought it out of his own money, too. See the nice cover;—and come till I show you the pictures."

"We haven't time now, dear. Miss Hodgens will be displeased if we are late at breakfast; and I wish to thank you again, Effie, for your kindness last night."

"I didn't think I did anything worth thanking for. I hope the rats didn't disturb you?"

"The cat took care they shouldn't," smiled Alphonse, as hand-in-hand they walked along, and entered the school-room, Alphonse thinking the while: "If I could open my heart henceforth to anyone it would be to this child;—but no, no, no! I must guard myself against any fondness or feeling of affection stealing over me. If those in whose faith I had a right to trust deceived me, what could I expect but disappointment from a giddy school-girl, who is nothing to me and to whom I am less."

Such were some of her reflections as in silence the breakfast was despatched. She little knew then or presaged how slight need she should have for such precaution, and how proximate was the moment that should separate her from any such danger, yet leave her regretting in deeper despondency. The breakfast things had just been removed, and the school turned out for half an hour's recreation, when a loud double-knock was heard, and the hall-door being opened, Major Sirr, on official business, was announced.

"Good-lack!" cried Mrs. Hodgens, as, followed by Miss Medlicott and the Misses Hodgens, all alive with curiosity and awe, she filed into the parlour to receive the visitor, who, with formal bow, at once accosted her:

"Servant, ma'am. I understand you have in your employment a woman called Kitty Burke?"

"Yes, major, we have," said Miss Hodgens, with demonstrative respect.

"Then, ma'am, I must ask you to let me see her," returned the major, with pomposity.

"I'll call her," cried Euphemia, who, lingering beside Alphonse in the passage, heard all, and she darted like a bird down the kitchen stairs and into the kitchen, crying, in hurried whisper:

"Kitty, Kitty! here's that wicked Major Sirr that's hunting the rebels. He wants you; an' if you don't like to go up, make off out, an' I'll go up an' say you're not in."

Kitty, who was scouring the tables, stopped short at this announcement, and cried:

"What does the ould villain or the likes o' him want wid we? Why wouldn't I go up and face 'im? Get out o' my way, *alanna*." And, in her great hurry to face the major, Kitty forgot to throw by the scouring cloth embedded in freestone; but, with the same clutched in her brawny fist, and her stout arms stripped above the elbow, she presented her glowing red disk, framed in an ample white muslin cap-border, before the formidable inquisitor, and in accents certainly not conciliatory, said: "Here I am, sir; what may be yer business wid me?"

"You have a son, I believe," said the major, sternly, probing the keen, shrewd eye that as unflinchingly met his.

"I'm proud to own it, sir," was the succinct response.

"Can you tell me where he is at this moment?" demanded the major, with a look inviting confidence.

"Troth, an' I'm sorry I can't oblige ye," returned Kitty, quailing in heart but maintaining a bold front; "if it's what ye coome wid news o' somethin' to his advantage, a parergrap in the paper 'll be the most likely way to find 'im."

"Come, woman, don't be saucy," vociferated the major, glancing at his sub-official standing at the threshold; "we want your son's address, and must have it."

"Must yer honor? Well, the next time my little boy coomes to see me I'll tell him of the fine quality was axin' for him, an' make him lave me his card for yez."

"You're the most audacious woman I have ever come across," foamed the major, forgetting his politeness in his anger. "Don't suppose, ma'am, that we're not privy to all the lad's fine doings, clever as he and you think yourselves; and that we haven't ways and means of obtaining every information we want concerning him; *imprimis*, let me tell you what you will perhaps fain wonder at, that the chap has robbed his master to a large amount, and is in complicity with the United Irishmen; secondly, he has had his indentures cancelled, and taken service with a man of the name of O'Byrne."

"Then, what need for ye to coome to the boy's mother to ax her to inform upon her own son, if ye be so knowledgeable about 'im," retorted Kitty vehemently, stripping

her arms still more, and looking as if making ready for a pugilistic encounter with the major, who silently eyed her preparations askance. "Listen, my good man, it just happens that I know somethin' about my boy as well as you do; an' if you choose to hear it I can tell ye he's more innocent nor yerself by a good spell; an' if ye'll take the throuble, sir, to investigate properly, as a magis-thrate, an' thim that has the lives o' people in their hands should, ye'll larn that thim that tould such lies o' my boy is more like to be thieves than a child come of an honest father, an' well brought up; an' if ye want to know more, the gentleman that has taken him is the one to go to for information."

"Effie, come here; this little girl will tell you all she knows, major," cried Miss Medlicott, laudably zealous to facilitate the ends of justice. "That's a dear, tell the major everything you know."

Effie advanced; a wink from Kitty's eye, upon whom her face had been rivetted, gave her her lesson. With intense interest Alphonse watched the proceedings.

"You're a fine little girl," said the major, complacently tappin g her cheek; "a credit, upon my word, ma'am, to your school. How old is she?"

"Past twelve I think you are, Effie," said Miss Hodgens, blandly.

"Yes, ma'am," said Effie, with a cute look at Kitty.

"Dear, dear, I'd have thought her more," observed the major. "Well, my little girl, tell me, is the boy, Ned Burke, still in the—um—ah, your father's service?"

"I've no father," returned Effie, shortly, and with an under glance at the questioner.

"No! dear, dear; an orphan—gone to glory?—how sad! Your uncle, then?"

"Her brother, sir," put in Miss Hodgens.

"Ah, indeed. Well, my dear, he hired this boy, Ned Burke, did he not?"

"I don't know, sir."

"Yes, Effie, you do," screamed Miss Jemima, who at till now, with round open eyes, staring at and taking in all.

"Don't confuse the little dear," mildly rebuked the major. "She will just tell me what she remembers for knows. Most children, I find, are stupid, or easily dashed. So, dear, your brother hired Ned Burke to wait on him, I suppose, brush his coat, and the like?—is the lad still with him?"

"How can I tell?" suddenly blurted out Euphemia. "Go to Hugh, if you want to know, and ask him."

The major drew back, staring hard at the now moody-looking face before him.

"That's the best thing for you to do, major," said Mrs. Hodgens, scowling at Euphemia. "Go to the head-quarter for information."

"My dear ma'am," said the major, solemnly blowing his nose, "I have already seen the individual, who told me, with cool *insouciance*, that the boy having got a hint—where he would not tell me—that his delinquencies had been discovered by his fellow-apprentices, absconded—ran away from him last night, and he knew no more about him. Ah, these Papists! you—that is, we, the Government—can't trust them: they are sworn accomplices in every crime, and knitted in links it tasks us hard to sunder. Nevertheless, I am happy to say, we are energetic as ever at the good work of pacification, and by-and-by we may hope to reap the fruit of our labour. Tell me, my child"—he turned again to Euphemia—"to which of the societies of United Irishmen—I mean patriots—does your brother belong?"

"I don't think he belongs to any society," returned the child, unwary of the drift of such a question.

"Pooh! pooh! Why would he not; isn't he a patriot?" simpered the major.

"Oh, yes, he is," innocently returned Euphemia.

"Of course, and a great friend, I hear, of Lord Edward Fitzgerald;—does he see him often?"

"He and Miles dined at Frescati's with Lord and Lady Edward Fitzgerald before I came to school," said Euphemia, simply.

"Yes, to be sure; and what company had they?"

"A great many; but I don't know all their names, because I couldn't go, for I hadn't a dress nice enough."

"What a shame!" responded the major. "I'll see that you'll have a dress to go to the next party that'll take the shine out of them all. Tell me, who did you hear was there?"

"There was Miles, and Hugh, and cousins Gerald, and William Byrne of Ballymanus, and cousin Gregory, and Mr. Byrne of Cabinteely, and John Colclough, and Bagenal Harvey, and a lot more I forget the names of."

"Very good;—and now, tell me this"—Euphemia, lifting her eyes to his, glanced at Kitty, all on thorns, listening and watching the moment to admonish her by another sign to be careful of her words, caught the signal, but unluckily so did Major Sirr.

"Get out of this, you baggage, and don't be winking to the child," he exclaimed, starting up in a fury to dislodge Kitty by main force, of which unseemly exploit she saved herself and him the trouble by decorously withdrawing, her tongue in her cheek, and saying:

"If yer honour wants me agin, ye'll find me in the kitchen;—an', Miss 'Phemia, mind yer not bethrayed into givin' information that may hang innocent people."

"Let me go," screamed Euphemia, terrified at such a possibility as the admonition implied. "Wait for me, Kitty; I won't say another word if they cut the tongue out of me."

She burst away, and Major Sirr, perceiving he had elicited all the information he could hope for, with many apologies to the Misses Hodgens, took his departure.

"Come hither, woman," vociferated Mrs. Hodgens, calling to Kitty, whom she spied peeping through the banister of the kitchen stairs, to see the discomfited major depart, while she held Euphemia locked in her arms, consoling her with the assurance that she had shown a brave spirit, an' hadn't said anything that could hang a dog. Kitty advanced. "Be ready to leave this to-morrow morning;—d'ye hear?" enunciated the stentorian voice of the *major-domo*. "I'll have no fosterers of thieves stopping in my house;—d'ye hear?"

"I do, ma'am."

"Or a woman that has a son convicted of felony ;—d'ye hear ?"

"Yis, ma'am. Plaze to give me my papers. I'll not ax to throuble ye to wait till to-morrow ; I've frinds o' me own, Esther Mooney an' her husband an' childhre, goin' down in the cart this evenin' ; so if they give me a lift wid 'em as far as the county Wicklow, where they're goin,' I may's well take the convanience. Miss Meelia an' Misther Jeemes, that's grinnin' in the corner there, 'll cook the dinner ; an', while I go to pack up my little bundle ye can write my discharge."

"I'll give you no discharge, you saucy woman," yelled Mrs. Hodgens, every pimple in her face blooming into purple and scarlet with rage.

"Why, thin, ma'am, may I ax?" retorted Kitty, growing pale from similar cause. "Is it because ye manely took advantage of a poor woman's poverty and disthress to get her services widout wages, barrin' the kitchen stuff, ye'd refuse her a charakther, more special takin' her at short notice like it?"

"You needn't be ballyragging with your vulgar Irish brogue," shouted Mrs. Hodgens, jingling a large bunch of keys. "How do I know that I could give you a character for honesty, and your son a thief? Amelia and James tell me you often had him in the kitchen, and would bolt them out ; and one day, through a ohink, they saw him eating apple pie. 'Pon my word, give you a character, indeed, and plenty of good cooks going a-begging! Miss Fitzpatrick, what are you idling your time listening for? Let me tell you there's many ways of being dishonest ; and to cheat an employer of time and service is one of them." Thus rebuked, Alphonse glided away.

"May the Blessed Mother o' God look down on yer purty dauny face, *alanna* ; my heart warms to ye ; an' may the Son o' the Virgin break the cross afore ye," cried Kitty, looking compassionately after the mute receding form.

"Hush, woman! Don't be preaching," said Miss Medlicott, winding a ball of yarn ; "brawling won't serve you."

"Troth, an' sorry I'd be, ma'am, to lose my time wid the same on the likes o' them that hasn't the heart to hould it; an' begorra, now that I think of it, I wouldn't take a oharakther from ye if ye threw it afther me; for sure it's bad luck, an' no blessin,' I'd have wid it, an' so I wash my hands out of it, an' wish ye good morn."

"Horrid old beldame!" said Miss Hodgens, as Kitty, in high dudgeon, retreated to get her travelling gear in order.

"Are ye sorry I'm goin', Miss Effie? I'm sorry for lavin' ye, anyway," she cried, as alternately fuming and scolding she bustled about, gathering up her strays and waifs.

"Of course I am, Kitty; but you wouldn't take me with you?" answered Euphemia, eagerly.

"No, honey; how could I? An' what would your brother say? I'd call to tell him the whole story, only Ned told us last night he was goin' down to the Curragh to-day, so wouldn't be at home. Bad cess to SIRR!—what a way he was in to lay hold of my boy;—but in troth, Miss Effie, I'm sorry for lavin' ye, *asthore*. Who'll give ye yer Friday's dinner now, *aroon*, an' spake words o' advice an' comfort to ye?—Where's that apron gone?—I have it. An' thim dodgers to refuse me a oharakther! I'm glad, anyway, ye've got a companion of yer own sort, though she does look more like one that 'ud want comfort than be able to give it. Och, *wirra, wirra*, what a world it is!—Where did I put thim ould caps?"

Maintaining a running fire of such commentaries and mingled interjections, Kitty made all speed; and when it was time to go, she kissed Effie, who had asked and obtained permission to stay with her till she had packed.

"Now, *machree*," she added, "you just mind my bundle while I go see Miss Fitzpatrick, an' bid God speed to the ould tykes, as I wouldn't like to part in inimity wid the illuded crathurs; an' Miss Meelia might be for ransackin' my duds. I wondher how'll they'll manage the cookin' an' lots o' company to-morrow? To be sure they had engaged the pasthry-cook man to attind, wid a woman to help; only for that they wouldn't have let me go so soon, I'm

thinkin." Muttering thus all the way to the music-room, she knocked at the door and went in.

"I'm coome to bid ye good-bye, Miss," she said, dropping a courtesy.

"I'm very sorry you're leaving," said Alphonse, stopping the music lesson; "but I'm glad you are going down with friends of mine to the county Wicklow—they will be kind to you. To whom are you going there?"

"Why, thin, to a first cousin o' me own, Miss: Molly Doyle, that's nurse to Miss 'Phemia, an' married to a carpenter in good earnins; so till I can turn about to put my hand to somethin', I won't be shook, plaze God;—an' all that troubles me is Miss 'Phemia; an' glad I am she's got one o' her own sort that'll be company to her, an' give her good advice. Sure it's wondherful to see how easy she takes me goin', and I thinkin' she'd have made a pillalu, an' cried the eyes out o' her head;—but it's the way wid 'em, God help 'em for childhre; sure they have no better wit; it isn't want of heart in her, I know that; an' whin she coomes to miss me she'll be sorry enough, I warrant."

"Selfishly so, I daresay," thought Alphonse, with a feeling of self-commendation, that she had not suffered herself to warm to her juvenile acquaintance. Aloud she said: "I'll take what care I am able of the little girl, and will you tell Esther Mooney to remember me in her prayers, and that I was sorry I could not go to see her before she went?"

"I will, surely, Miss, God bless you," returned Kitty, receiving with diffidence a couple of shillings which Alphonse handed her, loath to lessen her scanty purse, yet ashamed to refuse; and with another courtesy recommending her to the Queen of Heaven, and the special interest of all the saints, Kitty withdrew, and went to fetch her bundle, over which Euphemia was standing guard, while the other servants were flitting to and fro, with their noses, as Kitty said, "turned up snuffing the sky." [Once again she embraced the child, who with much *sang froid* said:

"Kitty, just tell me, isn't it to Nurse Doyle yer going?"

"Why, *alanna*?" returned Kitty, with sharp, questioning eye.

"Oh, just to give her my love, an' to them all."

"Very well, Miss 'Phemia, I'll do that," said Kitty, feeling somewhat huffed and hurt in her feelings by the demeanour of her *protegée*, and thinking now that she has got a young friend in the governess, an' that the missuses has taken a turn in her favour, I'd like to know the reason, it's not much the little lady thinks of poor Kitty, that was so fond of her; I see that. "Och, musha, musha, it's a quare world," and with a heavy sigh to endorse the sentiment, Kitty departed, having on the way thrust her head into Mrs. Hodgens' *sanctum*, to say "Good-bye, ma'am; I just coome to say I'm goin', an' God forgive ye, an' mark ye to grace, you and yours. Amin."

That day, at dinner and at recreation, Alphonse watched Euphemia closely; but so far from detecting the smallest appearance of sorrow she appeared to be in rather exhilarated spirits, at play in particular she romped, skipped her rope, rolled her hoop, climbed the trees, and displayed a variety of antics that rather astonished the sad Alphonse, to whom withal she was ever disclosing some wild trait of genuine good feeling, lending cheerfully her toys to the children, swinging the little ones on the swing-swing, and running up now and again to say, "Miss Fitzpatrick, aren't you cold? I'll run in for a shawl to put about you," or "If you have a headache we won't make so much noise," or, "Would you rather I'd sit and talk with you?" But most of all did Alphonse feel it strange when separating for the night, Euphemia came, and throwing her arms round her neck to embrace her, said in deep pathetic tone:

"Good-night, Miss Fitzpatrick; next to Kitty I love you the best of anyone in this house, and I'd tell you something, only I'm afraid of old Hodgens; but to-morrow you'll know; and I'm very sorry you are here at all, because I don't think you'll ever be happy in it: no one could be happy with Miss Hodgens and Baby—that's Jemmy, you know;—only fancy calling that old doll Baby!"

"I think Miss Hodgens is very kind to you, and you seem to be very happy here," said Alphonse.

Euphemia made a grimace, and said "Good-night."

"Ungrateful little puss," smiled Alphonse, as she saw her retreat into her room and close the door.

Kitty Burke and her friends, all packed on a good bed of straw in a market-cart, driven by a good strong dray-horse, hired for the occasion, were very snugly jolting along, and pretty far on their way through Wicklow ground, when a horn, lustily blown, gave notice of the Rathdrum coach, which, drawn by four spanking horses, and bowling along in a whirlwind of dust, crowded with passengers, inside and out, soon appeared coming along and bearing down upon them; all eyes, as a matter of course attracted, turned to stare upon the flashy vehicle and its motley cargo.

"Oh, look, daddy!—oh, look mammy!—isn't that purty?" screamed the delighted children of the Mooney family, as, huddled in a heap, with pieces of bread and butter in their hands, they pointed to the red-and-yellow decorations and livery of the "speedy courier," as it dashed down. But a yell that drowned their infantine treble, and started every ear, and drew every eye, broke forth, as Kitty, springing up with outstretched arms, frantically shrieked, at the shrillest pitch of her voice:

"Stop! stop coach!—hould guard, man alive, I bid ye. The dickens go wid me, if there isn't Miss 'Phemia an' my levanther of a son on the top!"

"We'll be home before you, Kitty, an' tell them you're coming," shouted Euphemia, gleefully, from her airy pinnacle, and triumphantly she kissed hands and waved her handkerchief as the coach shot past; then turning to her companion, who less courageous, had interposed his cap between his visage and the unexpected apparition of his wrathful parent, she said, in reply to his ejaculation, "O Lord! we'll be murdered!" "Isn't it great fun, Ned? Suppose we do get banged itself, what matter."

"Dhrive on, Mick Mooney," commanded Kitty, in tone of authority; "whip on the baste, an' we'll easily come up wid 'em at the next stage. Oh, the little leprechaun, to play me sich a thrick; an' my villan o' a son to be mixed up in it! Ooh, wait an' see if I won't pay 'em off."

About twenty minutes elapsed, and at the next stage they came up with the runaways, just as the coach was

again about starting. Kitty jumped out and collared the pair.

"All right!" sung out the guard.

"Faix, an' it isn't, my good man;—anyway, you dhrove on; I'll make bould to lighten yer load o' these two passengers." Then, as the coach moved on, fiercely turning to her son, she cried: "What's the manin' o' this, at all at all, I want to know?"

"Arrah, mother, be aisy now," expostulated Ned, twisting uneasily in the grip that held him as in a vice. "Isn't it the masther sint me wid a letther to his brother, Mr. Miles."—He produced the document in proof.—"He gave me the hard word that the 'prentices accused me of robbin' the employer, and that the major was lookin' for me, an' to make out o' the way by night down to Wicklow. The coach overtook me this mornin', an' Miss 'Phemia made me get up on't."

Kitty, appeased by this explanation, relaxed her hold, and turned to Euphemia, who had already climbed into the car and ensconced herself on a bundle between Esther and little Kitty:

"Well, Missy; what have you to say for yerself?"

"Come, get in, Kitty; don't be losing time; we're a good step from Dunlavin yet; an' if we weren't there before you to get things ready, thank yourself. Did you think I was going to stay in that place after you were turned away. Come, jump up."

"Well, well, grant me patience!" cried Kitty, fairly bothered, as she scrambled again up the shaft. "An' what'll yer brothers say;—aren't ye afeared to meet them?"

"I suppose they'll growl like two bears," responded Euphemia, slightly wincing; "but I must put up with it," and she smiled at the enfranchised Ned taking up a position on the other shaft, while Mooney, plying the whip, urged on the horse.

"Musha, musha, God help yez for foolish childhre," groaned Kitty, mechanically taking out her beads—not to say them, for her mind was too addled by many things;

but she liked to feel them in her hand: they were her amulet in every trouble and danger.

"If there's a bog in the way now we'll all go into it together," said Euphemia, "an' that's some comfort."

"Lord! I'm quakin' thinkin' what ructions there'll be whin yer missed. What'll they think wint wid ye, at all at all?" grumbled Kitty, not soothed in her feelings by the comforting suggestion. "A bog, indeed! faix, it's a bog we'll be in whin we're cotch. I wouldn't wondher if the brothers 'ud murther ye."

"Kitty, it's I would like to see the faces of the Hodgenses when they'll be looking for me."

"An' didn't ye lave even a line to say ye had eloped?"

"Now, Kitty, don't talk folly. Is it to have them flying like wild things after me? Not a line; they'll know it time enough when I'm safe. And you must go to Miles first—he's the only one I'm afraid of—and tell him the whole story; and I'll hide till he promises not to be angry. At any rate, I'll be off to Molly, if you don't like to face Miles, an' she'll bring him to reason, I'll engage. So make yourself easy about it."

CHAPTER XIV.

A JUNTA MEET TO DEVISE SOME PLOT TO ROB A CATHOLIC GENTLEMAN OF HIS ESTATE.

"Among the rest, we've heard of one,
The Reverend — Something Hamilton,
Who stuffed a figure of himself
(Delicious thought), and had it shot at,
To bring some Papist to the shelf
That couldn't otherwise be got at."

MOORE.

It was early in the afternoon, that is to say some time between the hours of twelve and one o'clock, when the Sham Squire—Higgins—wrapt in a loose morning-gown of crimson taffeta, lined with orange silk, a green velvet cap with gold tassel upon his greasy head, and his huge flat

feet encased in morocco slippers, lounged upon a divan in his study, with a morning journal in his hand, and beside him a table spread with a litter of pens, sealing-wax, ink, writing-paper, pencils, penknives, a miscellaneous collection of odds and ends—seals, wafers, memoranda, &c. Seated in a well-cushioned fauteuil adjacent, inhaling the fumes of a fragrant cigar, booted, spurred, and in military equipment, was Lord Carhampton, who had dropped in for a morning lounge also with the Squire. In juxtaposition were Lord Norbury, on his way to the court; Majors Sirr, Swan, Sandys; and nearer to the door clustered a group of as ill-looking individuals as ever, in expression and lineament, belied the human face divine—nay, so repelling, so revolting to look upon that the most unskilled of physiognomists would turn from them with pleasure, to experience more agreeable sensations in contemplating the hog wallowing in his sty, or the carrion bird rending his prey, and banquetting on the field of battle. Lord Kingsborough, too, was there, imbibing a morning potation of soda water and brandy; and John Claudius Beresford, who, despite his uncle Lord Clare's undisguised prejudice, continued to patronise the Squire, who subsidised and made it worth the while, in various ways, of those whose independence was not large enough, or pride or principle lofty enough, to reject with scorn such a fostering; and in the midst and above the hum and buzz of voices around him rose that of Higgins, as laying down the journal which he had been looking over, he turned to a lean, cadaverous man, with rat-like visage, and clad in threadbare garments, unobtrusively skulking, as though timorous or fearful of notice, behind his comrades, and said:

"So, Tim Lawson, the job's a failure; ye couldn't get informers to swear evidence at any price?"

Tim Lawson dragged a shrivelled lip from a set of large rusty, fan-like teeth, in a hideous grin, and spoke in accents that much resembled the scream of a gander:

"The people about is avaricious, yer honour. One man up there, in the name o' Larry Doyle, that owns a little bit o' ground from the family, jeered and asked me, 'Did I think bacon and banes every day for dinner 'ud be pre-

mium enough for sellin' a good masther?—that if the likes o' me wor content to live on shrimps, he that had kings for his ancesthors was used to betther, an' should be paid shuitable thribute for any thraties he inthered into wid the Castle. An' another chap, one Christy Kennedy, scoffed at me, an' said 'that if my employers couldn't afford to put betther coverin' o' flesh on the bones o' thim as sarved 'em than I showed, they didn't covet the sarvice, an' 'ud rayther hould by the ould stock;'—ugh! they're a bad lot!"

"Piffh, hiffh!" aspirated the squire, looking ruefully at Claudius Beresford, who looked sternly at Major Sirr, who looked pleadingly at a bloated, depraved, red-visaged miscreant, who, with glance half-ferocious, half-sympathising, met his, and said, apologetically :

"Begorra, yer hanner, Tim says what's throe enough : they're a bad lot up there in Cabinteely. Not one of 'em, good, bad, or indifferint, can be got to swear agin the ould family, or help the Government wid information. They'll have to be all put out, every one of 'em; there ain't no use in offerin' 'em bribes, at all at all, for whin the new praties is in they've more nor they know what to do wid;—it's too well off they are."

"But, sirrah, that's not the way to set about the business!" exclaimed Lord Carhampton, withdrawing the cigar from his lips to express his opinion with more force. "Look you, Mr. Jemmy O'Brien, 'tis not excuses but work the Government that supplies you with bread and butter requires, and must have."

"That's a fact, Jemmy," said Major Sirr; "you know Government has other means to enforce information as well as bribes, and these are placed at your disposal; for it comes to this—the country, if it have to be burnt to a cinder, must be pacified."

"Musha, thin, yer hanner," responded Jemmy O'Brien, confidently, "I can bring plenty to certify that I did my business to the best o' my ability. We had Pat Dolan whipped 'till he hadn't as much skin left as id cover a teether: an' sure, more be token, he's dead since. An' we had Tom Malony pitchcapped; an' signs on't, he's roamin'

the counthry a foolish idiot ever since, an' his ould mother a crazed Bedlamite, an' his wife dead of a still-born child, an' two more of 'em gone to the roadside. An' we had Thady Dwyer picketted; an' Owen Kelly half-hanged; an' Fergus Farral, an' Con Loughlin burned out, an' wracked;—och, bedad it 'ud take me a list as long as to-day an' to-morrow to tell yez all the people we put to the inquisition in Cabinteely, Carrickmines, Loughlinstown, an' Bray, Tim Lawson, Paddy M'Guane, Lieutenant Hepenstal, I an' a lot more of us laid hould on, to make them inform, an' sorra bit o' success we had. We have got O'Duffy and some of em sint on boord the tindher, besides, to be transported to fight agin the Americans—not that I think they'll fire a shot, but they'll stop a bullet anyhow."

Jemmy O'Brien, with self-satisfied aspect, having made his peroration, the Sham Squire, Lords Carhampton and Kingsborough, the three majors, Claudius Beresford, and Lord Norbury, all gazed at each other a moment in blank suspense; then, feigning a sigh, Major Sandys observed:

"The glorious constitution is all a sham if the people be thus permitted to flout the law, and to triumph in their obstinacy."

"It must not be," solemnly remarked Judge Norbury; "we must proceed to extreme measures and hang some of them *de facto* for an example: the first that is brought before me, on any charge, I will assume to be guilty, and sentence without parley."

"That will be the only way to break the spirit of the rebels, and terrify them into submission," said Lord Carhampton.

"Piffh, piffh! only think of the confiscations and rewards Reynolds, Armstrong, Magan, and others are on the point of being enriched with to-morrow, or I'm a coon; an' there's that fine estate of Cabinteely, that would make the fortune of a dozen, still beyond our reach for lack of information," groaned Higgins.

"And though we can't lay our hand upon any overt treason, we have a well-grounded conviction that Robert Byrne is in his sleeve as great a malcontent as the most notorious of the rebels," cried Lord Kingsborough, solacing

himself with a pinch of snuff; "It's d——d unfortunate the law should be so—a—hem! so——"

"Of course," chimed in Lord Norbury, "a man that's not with Government must be against it; and we all know Bob Byrne refused his vote to the Union; I'd hang him, if it were but on that evidence, if I had my will."

"It happened unluckily," said Major Sirr, looking at Higgins, "that we were disappointed meeting his kinsman, Hugh O'Byrne, the day we dined at the Hodgens's; I wager we'd have pumped something out of him. I must say those women take bad care of their pupils when a thieving servant found it so easy, in her flight, to decoy and kidnap one of them. Only I have just now so much serious business on hand I'd have her brought back with the child, and lodged in jail."

"I tell ye what it is," cried Major Swan, facetiously, and filling out a glass of brandy, which he swallowed at a draught, and smacking his lips, he continued: "whipping obstinate rebels may be good fun, and picketting, and half-hanging, and pitchcapping, and making bonfires of their huts, as good pastime as any other, but it won't make our fortune, that's clear. And what, in the name of common sense, have we got hands, and eyes, and tongues, and brains for, I want to know, if not to improve our interest? Now, there's an estate all our teeth are watering to have a snap at, an' yet among us all there isn't as much wit as would serve to cure the eyesore, or maybe"—he glanced ironically at Major Sirr—"too much conscience."

"Bah! bah! bah!" sneered Claudius Beresford, "I never heard that foxes had conscience against grapes, unless they were sour."

"Piff! piff! sweet or sour, show us but the way to get at 'em, an' we'll stomach 'em," grinned the Squire. "I take it, man" (to Major Swan), "you an' I would become Clare Hill House as well as Bob Byrne; an' good meat an' wine would agree as well with our Protestant digestion as with his Popish one, so no harm 'ud be done; it 'ud be only a change of hands in the place; an' I wager we'd flare up in style would show we were the right men in the right place, an' make flunkeys stare. What says the 'Devil's own?' lets have his verdict on the matter."

Lord Carhampton, with a smile that betrayed his thorough appreciation of the *sobriquet* conferred upon him, made response: "Egad! I hold it such a sin and shame to see so much of the country monopolised by one of a proscribed creed, burrowing in peace and comfort under the wing of patronage, I'd willingly lend a hand to blow him up and plant some good Prods in his stead; so let's have the light of your genius to show the way, Swan."

"If we haven't or can't procure ground to work upon," said Swan, "can't we make it?" And he leered significantly at the informers. "Now, I dare be sworn," he added, with a jocular wink, "that if we ripped up some of the demesne we'd find concealed arms; or surprised the house by a nocturnal visit under the Gunpowder Act, we'd make some discovery that would be worth a hundred pounds or more to the finder. Eh, Jemmy, what do you say? I see your daylights waking up. And I can tell you I have good reason to guess a mare's nest would be found for the seeking. What do you say, Tim Lawson?"

The two informers, quite comprehending the drift of the insidious proposal, looked warily at each other to decipher the thoughts of each. At length Tim Lawson snivelled, in a cackling undertone:

"The risk'll be great, yer honour. If we wor caught or seen at it?"

"Musha, thin, who's to catch or see ye of a dark night, ye ould skeleton of a crab?" returned Jemmy O'Brien, with a look of extreme disgust at his pusillanimous colleague. "Down by the sthrame in the hollow 'll be mighty convanient; an' if any Jack-o'-lanthrons chance to come meandhring by the way, can't we say we wor spearin' o' eels;—how-and-iver Tim, honey, if ye don't feel in heart wid the venthre to obleege the gintlemin, I'll take it on meself to go through the job wid a friend o' me own that isn't white-livered anyhow, an' that's Billy Cody."

"Och! for the matther o' that, Jemmy," cried the other, in haste, "I don't begrudge the risk nor the throuble, so it pays well. An shure, ain't we armed wid weapons an' purvided to stick any intherlopers that comes upon us Och, yea! I'll help ye wid pleasure!"

"The work must be done, my lads, so that the wind musn't get inkling of it, else we'll be ruined," said Major Sandys, excitedly. "If you bungle the work we may as well all take ship for Botany Bay, there will be such a deuce of bother made about it."

"Never fear, yer hanner," returned Jemmy O'Brien, reassuringly; "I've done more intricate manoevers in my day, an' ye may count on't I see my way in this. All we want is a thrifle o' wages to begin on; an', if ye plaze, yer hanners, the little thrifle that's due to me for swearin' agin Darby Brady an' Pat Ryan at the last sessions, an' Mick Healy."

"Certainly, Jemmy, you shall have it; not a man in our pay more deserving of it, if work be any gauge of merit," cried Major Sirr. "Here's a draft for seven pounds on Beresford's Bank; take it there and 'twill be cashed for you."

"Long life to yer hanner!"

"And see, Jemmy, as soon as you have any information call on me at the Castle. How soon do you think we may expect you?"

"Well, yer hanner, I won't let the grass grow undher my feet, anyway."

"Very well! be off now and make speed. Well, Lawson and M'Guane, what have you got to say?"

"Yer honour," piped Lawson, whose avaricious eyes dilated at the sight of mammon, "it was I put the lighted coal into the thatch of Priest Fitzpatrick's cabin an' burned down the chapel, an' made a bonfire of it at Lucan the other night."

"Well, 'twas a good job," grinned Major Sandys; "but if you had burned the priest along with it you would be entitled to a reward you can't ask for only consuming bare walls."

"Tell you what, Tim," growled Lord Carhampton, "make a bonfire of Parson Berwick's house at Esker and I'll give you fifty gold guineas; and if you make charcoal of the parson I'll double it."

"Plaze yer hanner," interposed M'Guane, sidling confidentially up to Squire Higgins and whispering, "yer be-

houlden to me a thrifle for the help I gave Watkins' boys—Beakey, an' Tickell, an' Knox—the night we bruk into farmer Casey's house, on purtince o' sarchin' for firearms, an' carrid off his niece."

"Get out, ye extortioner," furiously ejaculated the Squire, making a kick at the claimant; "didn't the girl jump from a top window in Mother Lewellyn's and fracture her skull?"

"That wasn't no fault o' ours," retorted M'Guane, sulkily; "an' if ye don't pay up, sorra fut I'll stir in the job ye have on hands to-night."

"Come, Higgins," cried Lord Carhampton, snappishly, "you musn't be churlish with our fellows. Here"—he tossed a couple of gold pieces to Lawson and M'Guane—"there's earnest for you, and hold yourselves in readiness to attend further orders." The men greedily clutched the coin and with softened temper departed.

Carhampton addressed himself to Major Sirr: "So you've settled to spring the mine to-morrow and blow up the United Society in Bridge-street?"

"To-morrow, God willing," the major responded, with the impressive air of one embarked in an enterprise whose magnitude and importance conveyed a sense of vast responsibility, "we shall let slip the hounds and bag the covey. Armstrong, who dined yesterday at Lord Edward Fitzgerald's, and Reynolds, who spent the evening before with Byrne of Ballymanus and Oliver Bond, inform us that a crisis is at hand, and the well-organised plans of the leaders culminating to a decisive point of action; hence, as delays are dangerous, and they have noticed us that Lord Edward and a full committee sit to-morrow, Lord Castlereagh, with whom I have conferred, is of opinion the sooner we pounce down and make a mess of the business the better: and my Lord Norbury may count on't that out of all the arrests we anticipate making he will be called on to prescribe hemp for some of 'em—ha! ha! ha!"

"I'll, as state physician, cheerfully contribute my poor quota of service to bleed, asphyxiate, or purge it by any other means that may be deemed desirable of its malady," responded the judge, with a vivacious smile that contrasted

pleasantly with the major's dreary laugh. "By-the-by," he added, with blithe humour, "I fear poor Clonmel's term of service is nearly expired; never saw a man so tottering. Did ye hear what that little beast Curran said the other day as he passed us by at the review in the Park? 'My poor fellow,' said he, *en passant*, with his confounded comical grin, 'don't be in such a hurry to set off to your estate in Hades; we're going to have some prime sport; pray for an extension of leave to enjoy a few more capital convictions; and who knows but Norbury and few might be ready to accompany you. 'Tis lonesome for a man to go by himself to a *terra incognita*, where he mayn't be quite sure of his welcome, or whether the inhabitants be friends or foes.' Wasn't that execrable taste?"

"Atrocious!" cried Claudius Beresford. "But that little animal seems to be voted a free-lance by common consent. He lately came athwart Lord Clare, not in the most pacific of moods, and bawled after him as he hurried along at his usual speed: 'I say, friend, don't forget to fetch your pistols when you take passage in Captain Charon's boat across Styx; you may find them useful. Have a shot at Pluto, Rhadamanthus, or any obstreperous ghost that thwarts you.' My uncle would have knocked down any other chap in a jiffy, but Curran he feigned not to notice. *Apropos*, Carhampton, how speeds your suit with Donna Florinda? She is, to my notion, the finest girl in the world." Lord Carhampton puffed out a volume of plummy smoke, but made no response, as with hands in fob and eyes half closed he luxuriously inhaled the vapoury fumes, whose narcotic essence soothed his faculties in delicious languor. The Sham Squire grunted audibly:

"She's a tip-top prime 'un, but steps too high; carries too much head to my likin'. I wonder, my lord, that, as money ain't yer object, you wouldn't fancy a more winsome lass?"

"'Tis just what suits me," responded Lord Carhampton, with a gesture of hauteur. "I'm sick and surfeited of the pliant wenches provided by Mother Lewellyn for our casual entertainment. One upon whom I design to confer a

coronet I am pleased to see endowed with dignity as well as attractions to grace it."

"But what about your old woman?" exclaimed Lord Kingsborough, naively. "And are the brothers content? Methinks the lady herself appears coy; she went down this morning to her friends in Wexford, with her cousin."

"My old woman and I have squared it amicably," smiled Carhampton. "She professed to be so disgusted with my infidelities and cruelty that she was glad to cry quit to the tune of a thousand a year, and take shelter with Colonel Moncton. Captain Esmond and his brother I have satisfied that there is no danger of a trial for bigamy; and for the lady herself, she is cute enough to think, I daresay, that a little reticence will enhance her value. Ah, they are sly pussies, the fair sex; but I have studied them till I can read them like an alphabet."

"Do you know that conceited coxcomb O'Driscoll is said to be paying great attention to your niece, Lady Alicia?" said Beresford.

"Alicia is a stubborn fool, and encourages the puppy; but I can't help it," cried his lordship, in an effervescence of wrath. "Her money's in her own hands, and she's old enough to know what she's about, whether wise enough is another thing."

"And there's big fat Caroline Damer receiving the addresses of that behemoth Hugh O'Byrne," chimed in Squire Higgins, with the look of a much-injured man. "Isn't it a shame and a scandal to see such fortunes falling into the hands of Papists?"

"It must be put a stop to, that sort of thing," fiercely exclaimed Lord Kingsborough. "I'll move for a bill in parliament against it; 'tis infamous, not to be borne, that these sly designing knaves obtrude themselves out of place, and have the daring to aspire to such heights. What next, forsooth?"

"You're misinformed, at any rate, about Caroline Damer," said Carhampton, "for I have good authority for stating that Guildford Colandisk has proposed for the heiress, and been accepted."

"Go long!" ejaculated Squire Higgins, with eyes

starting from the socket. "Wasn't Guildford pledged to a nicer girl than any one of the whole box and dice, the old Higgenboggan's little niece Fitzpatrick; an' didn't we as good as quarrel because I wanted him to give her up for the heiress."

"That was when she had the prospect of being an heiress, too," said Carhampton. "But I presumed you had known, that since she offended her aunts, lost the property, and been turned out a beggar to earn her livelihood, as the Misses Hodgens told us, in their employment, Colandisk had cooled down a bit, and thought better of transferring his affections."

"Piffh! hiffh! this is good news!" puffed the Squire. "Guilford an' I had a misunderstanding about some money, and he fought shy of me; but now 'twill be all right; I'll call on him, and square it up with a dinner. I've asked Lick Pomfret and his two cousins, Agamemnon, and Cadwaleder, who've just hailed from England, to eat their mutton with me to-day, along with Buck Whaley. What a loss we can't have Clonmel. Come over you to fill the table. I hear Lick's in love with Ethel Courtney, is that true?"

"Not unlikely; they're a pushing lot," said Lord Carhampton, standing up to go; "and I never knew a good thing in the market but the parson is sure to snatch at it. More than once I've detected the reverend brother casting sheep's eyes at my game; and only that I can see he hasn't a chance, and is a useful tool disposed to my service, I'd soon twist his neck the other way; *au revoir, ami*." His lordship withdrew, in company with Lord Kingsborough, deeply pondering the expediency of twisting Lyeurgus Pomfret's neck on his own account, and removing from his path a rival in favour of the pretty Ethel Courtney.

Presently, Squire Higgins's carriage, being announced to take him to the courts with the judge, a *levee en masse* of the morning visitors ensued, and the apartment was soon left empty. Majors Swan and Sirr, walking soon after, arm-in-arm, down Sackville-street, came upon a knot of gentlemen, conversing apart, not far from one of the

principal hotels; to judge by their varied gestures—eager, earnest, excited, and vigilant—they were discussing some theme of interest, in which, however, they were not so absorbed as to be inattentive to the approach of the majors, in whose presence, acted upon as by a spell, they simultaneously became silent and reserved. Coming up and halting, Major Sirr, whose keen eye took in all at a glance, politely accosted one prominent among the rest, and said :

“Good-morning, sir; I was sorry for the *contretemps* that deprived me of the pleasure of meeting you a few days ago at my friend Mrs. Hodgens’. I’m glad, however, you have got news of the little girl. Sad scamps those youngsters are !”

“Thank you, major,” returned Hugh O’Byrne, with calm, grave smile. “’Tis all right; my brother wrote to let me know the foolish child ran away after the servant to whom she was attached left; fortunately they met on the road, and all arrived home safely.”

“The boy Ned Burke, I understand, went with them,” said the major, with a significant look at Hugh, who answered, without embarrassment, yet evasively :

“No doubt, sir, your multiplied sources and means of information are quite reliable; but since the boy left me I have made no further investigation about him, nor can I give you the smallest information that might set you on his track. If, as you assert, he has been guilty of the charges brought against him, he will do his best, no doubt, to elude pursuit.”

“He’ll be clever if he elude me !” growled the major, withdrawing, after a searching glance at each of the group, all of whom he well knew by sight, and some of them sufficiently to take off his three-cornered hat to. When he had removed far enough to be out of hearing, Hugh turned and resumed the interrupted thread of his speech; he said, addressing collectively the circle of his auditors :

“Now, I am not myself what might be termed a good physiognomist, nor am I gifted with a shrewd perception of character, as is my brother Miles, whose judgment in deciphering these hieroglyphics I have never known to err; yet, from my brief acquaintance with Captain Arm-

strong, when we met at dinner in your house at Frescati, Lord Edward, and from what I saw of Reynolds, whom I met the other evening with you, William, I entirely corroborate the opinion of Miles, and warn you that I mistrust these two men."

"But, my dear friend," said Lord Edward, hurriedly, "if we go on this way, in whom shall we repose confidence? Suspicion and over-caution may prove our bane, as well as too confiding trust; weak, timidly apprehensive of a foe in every face, and a lurking ambuscade at every step, will rarely achieve emprise allotted but to the bold and hopeful. Is it not so, Bond?" He turned to a fine-looking man on his left, who made answer, prompt and vigorous:

"Never will I credit that human nature could gratuitously plunge itself into slough so vile, as having a choice of glory to elect infamy; no, no, O'Byrne, your anxiety in the business oppresses you with chimerical fears that have no foundation. I'll stake my all on the faith of Reynolds and Armstrong.

"And I," said William Byrne of Ballymanus. "What after all, have the poor fellows done to forfeit our confidence? We can lay our hand on nothing overt; and as for a man's type of physiognomy, shape of nose, formation of mouth, expression of eye"—he laughed scornfully—"being brought in evidence against him, why, a good many would be in a bad way, according to the impressions made by these features.

"I don't know, William," returned Hugh, thoughtfully. "I once heard Miles say it was not so much the eye as the mind that received any indelible impression, how often the eye has been fascinated with beauty, or displeased with homeliness, till the impartial mind discriminating the respective merits of each, has adjusted its own balance. An elder brother we had once, and his wary text was: 'Listen to the voice of the heart;' and that of mine instinctively bids me warn you to shun too much trust in Reynolds and Armstrong."

"By Jove, if they were minded to hurt us, 'tis too late to retract now," said Lord Edward Fitzgerald, an uneasy

expression of doubt and misgiving shifting in his troubled eyes. "What would you have us do, Bond?"

"I'll tell you what you'll do, Lord Edward," said Hugh O'Byrne: "depute any two persons of ability, in whom you have a good opinion, to watch the movements of Reynolds and Armstrong by night and day, and keep yourself out of sight for a little while, as I have reason to know that the Argus eyes of the Castle are watching your every step with the vigilance of a tiger tracking its prey."

"I can't; I must attend the meeting to-morrow in Bridge-street," said Lord Edward, imperatively. "The whole business now lies in a nutshell—a few days more and we may snap our finger at the Castle."

"For which very reason your jeopardy is all the more imminent," persisted Hugh. "Do you suppose the Castle is ignorant of it? Listen, I have friends connected with the Castle—Hussey Burgh, Foster, and others—who have told O'Driscoll and myself in confidence that Government is in possession of all your plans and designs. Who made it thus *au fait*, if not traitors in the camp? And I know enough to caution you to keep from this out beyond reach of its law. What the Castle myrmidons are planning I am not able to acquaint you, but that there is some immediate *coup d'état* at hand, I fear." The energetic tone and earnest manner of Hugh, at length seemed to infuse into the minds of his audience a conviction that his warning should not be quite disregarded.

"I'll tell you what, Lord Edward," cried Oliver Bond, by way of compromise. "I have no doubt but that as you are the cynosure upon whom the eyes of the Castle are fixed, it may be as well for you not to appear at the council to-morrow. You can stay at Leinster House, and in the evening we can bring you the report of the day's proceedings."

"Well, I'm agreeable," said Lord Edward, and the party separated, each to his own rendezvous, and anxiously forecasting the future, pregnant with fate to the country.

CHAPTER XV.

LADY ALICIA LUTTRELL AND MAURICE O'DRISCOLL.

"Like Dian's kiss, unasked, unsought,
Love gives itself but is not bought;

No one is so accursed by fate,
No one so utterly desolate;
But some heart though unknown,
Responds unto his own."

LONGFELLOW.

"AND, well, sir, may I ask what have you been doing with yourself that I have not laid eyes on you for several days, and then you only appear to answer a subpoena to dinner, with an apology of pre-engagement somewhere else?"

Such was the speech, half-badinage, half-rebuke, beneath which, concealing contending emotions of irritation and pleasure, Lady Alicia Luttrell accosted Maurice O'Driscoll as he appeared in her drawingroom one Sunday after church hour. "Don't say a word, now; you cannot excuse yourself, truant," she playfully cried, in a high-pitched voice, and cheek and eye glowing with excitement, as she tapped him with her sunshade and motioned him to a place on the sofa beside her. "You can't excuse yourself, sir; and the only acceptable satisfaction you can make me is to set aside your other engagement and dine with us to-day."

"But, pardon me, I can excuse myself," smiled O'Driscoll, as he took the proffered seat. "Having a few days' leave of absence from my office, I had promised my friend, Mr. Hugh O'Byrne, to accompany him to the county Kildare, where some unexpected business claimed his presence."

Lady Alicia pouted her lips, shrugged her shoulders, and looking put out of temper, like a spoiled child, mur-

mured discontentedly: "I'm sure I wonder what pleasure you can take in the society of that great Ursa Major; you and he are inseparable; and how can you bear the drudgery of an office that monopolises all your time, and doles you out a holiday as to a schoolboy?"

Maurice laughed. "I'm sorry you do not more esteem my friend Mr. O'Byrne; and as to office drudgery, Lady Alicia, all I have to plead is that necessity has no law; my friend Tom Taylor, whose command to dinner I must obey, is a most exigent master."

Lady Alicia turned up her nose, curved her lip, and made contemptuous answer: "I used to think you Irish gentlemen had spirit."

O'Driscoll's eyes mirthfully danced as he replied: "Would you have a fellow starve or go barefoot, rather than earn a respectable competence to enable him to hold his footing in the world? Methinks any spirit that militated against his making himself independent were better let ooze away."

"There are other ways of making an independence," cried Lady Alicia, "more suitable to a gentleman: for instance, the army, the Church, or to—marry," she added, glancing bashfully upwards, and blushing and simpering as she met the calm, thoughtful gaze of the young man rivetted upon her.

Sedately he made answer: "Far from me to depreciate religion or its teachers, but I am not hypocrite enough to embrace, as means of livelihood, a profession of what ought to be the excellence of which I entertain an exalted conception; for the army I have no taste; and who could I, a veritable *sans terre*, presume to ask to share in wedlock the inheritance of Ishmael?"

Lady Alicia sighed softly, and her voice was tremulous and low, as she replied, with downcast eyes and fiddling with the strings of her bonnet: "Love levels all difficulties; for my part, I could throw myself, title, fortune, and all, into the arms of a man I loved, were he a beggar."

"But everyone may not be so disinterested as your enthusiastic self, or have the good fortune to be gifted

with qualities so to captivate," returned Maurice, with a look of surmise that plainly showed he began to feel mystified by the manner and words of his companion, who made present response with humour partly petulant and partly bantering:

"Really, men are so obtuse, so dull and slow to take in an idea, that it were to be wished every year were a leap year and ladies privileged to pop the question. I suppose, sir, you would not expect one to make love to you in broad English, and condescend to say: "Will you marry me?"

Maurice, a good deal perplexed by this catechetical address, but still more by the rays of light that were beginning to scintillate upon his brain, was mutely pondering to what point the lady was drifting, when to his great relief and her evident chagrin the door opened and Miss Gubbins came in; but the reprieve was temporary.

"Oh, is it you, Susan? Go, dear, and fetch my *sal volatile* from the dressing-room; I feel a little faint," said Lady Alicia.

But blundering Susan Gubbins returned: "I've brought it with me;" and without heeding the waspish look that unmistakably cried: "You stupid fool! can't you take the hint, and leave the room," seated herself near Maurice, and said, sweetly:

"I'm so glad to see you, Mr. O'Driscoll, and, I can tell you, so is somebody else, too."—She leered at Lady Alicia.—"And we hadn't always dry eyes in your absence. How cruel it is of you men to trifle with the susceptibilities of hearts that you have enslaved; but I fear you ever will be tyrants."

Lady Alicia's temper was quite soothed; instead of being a marplot, most judiciously the dear creature, whom she could now have hugged, came at a most auspicious moment as an auxiliary to her aid. With fluttering bosom she languishingly raised her eyes, moistened with a little humidity, and looked meek deprecation of such an avowal.

O'Driscoll, all on thorns, and now quite cognisant of his position, looked more puzzled than ever; but now his

embarrassment was not in his ignorance of, but how to extricate himself from the coil winding around him. Lady Alicia's undisguised admiration and favour had from the beginning, he knew, singled him out for patronage, which he had, to the utmost verge of courtesy, politely but firmly rejected. Mortifying her pride by a dignified reserve, and disappointing her vain hopes and insidious advances by cold indifference, that had, he believed, finally given her to understand he courted no intimacy, and had, finally alienated her interest, and diverted into some other channel adulation which from her never for a moment dazzled his mind or flattered his vanity. As with bent brow, and unconsciously stern aspect, he sat meditating how to compass a speedy escape without committing himself in breach of good manners, or giving offence, Miss Gubbins again opportunely blundered to his aid, saying :

"Indeed, all men, I must say, are not so obdurate, or short-witted, or what d'ye call it ? Of course you've heard of Guildford Colandisk's good-luck. He was not too proud or too coy to ask for the hand of an heiress, and next week he and Caroline Damer are to be married."

It was with something of the feline disappointment and rage of a cat from which, just while it was in the act to spring, a bird has winged its flight, that Alicia Luttrell marked the sudden alteration of O'Driscoll's countenance, as waking from dormant repose to swift animation, he said :

"But that must be an idle rumour ; Colandisk was engaged to Miss Fitzpatrick."

"But, you know, Miss Fitzpatrick is no longer an heiress," said Susan Gubbins, with sly wink and inflection upon the word heiress.

"Yes, I know she refused to conform, and so has lost a fine property—a disappointment, of course ;—but what has that to do with it. Colandisk, though not wealthy, has a comfortable independence."

"And would you expect him to share that with a beggar ?" cried Lady Alicia, scornfully.

"Yes, if he loved her. Would you have him act less

generously than you would yourself? You remember what you said awhile ago?"

"Dear Maurice, you are right, I do," pathetically whimpered Lady Alicia, laying her hand tenderly upon his. "And it is shamefully dishonourable of Colandisk to have behaved so to that poor deceived thing. If anyone acted so to me I know it would break my heart; but Alphonse, fortunately for herself, hasn't much feeling, nor an atom of pride; and her ingratitude to those poor ladies, her aunts, is shocking."

"Only think of her running away from them, after all their care, and trouble, and kindness," moaned Susan Gubbins.

"No such thing; they turned her out," cried Lady Alicia, tartly.

"My dear, Miss Higgenboggan told me they would no longer endure her disrespect, disobedience, and impertinence; and yet that they sorely missed her, she was so useful in the house and made it so cheerful."

"Nonsense, Sue; the girl herself told me, crying, that they sent her away, and that she was glad to find an asylum with the Hodgens' people, and earn her bread by teaching in the school. Out of charity I am taking lessons on the harp from her there. 'Tis a pity she has such a good voice, that can be now of little use to her, unless she takes my advice and goes as a public singer: but she's got to look so faded, and shabby, and dull, and taken to wearing caps and aprons! Indeed, 'tis a great come down; but for all that, Maurice, I agree with you, it was not right of Guildford Colandisk to let himself be seduced by the artifices and blandishments of that cunning, unprincipled Caroline Damer, after all but ruining the reputation of one who so entirely trusted to his love and honour as poor unfortunate Alphonse Fitzpatrik;—what man would think of her now? By-the-by, wasn't that a fine sermon we had to-day from sweet Parson Lamb?"

"I did not much like it," said Maurice, coldly. "I do not care for homilies that exhort men, Christian men, to feud and strife rather than to cultivate peace and good will."

"Well, I daresay you are right; but they tell us it is necessary sometimes to wield the sword of the spirit. Do you know that angelic young divine, the Rev. Sardanapalus Pomfret, is to preach this evening in Thomas's Church."

"Indeed! I can't say I admire him; he appears to me egotistical, conceited, and fanatical. I thought he had gone down to his curacy?"

"So he had—the whole family went to see the place, and spend a few weeks there. Lamb kindly lent them the rectory till he's ready to go down himself; but Sardanapalus had to come up to preach for the Rev. Agamemnon, his cousin, who has been appointed chaplain to the Ancient Britons. What a pious family they are all! I'm sure if ever I marry, which is very unlikely, since I never could marry any but one I loved, I would have all my sons in the Church."

"Don't despond, Lady Alicia; the Honourable Mr. Right will come yet," exclaimed O'Driscoll, cheerfully, and preparing to go. "The happy swain who shall win your love, and be worthy of it is, I trust, not far distant."

"Then you won't dine?" pleaded Lady Alicia, doubtful of what construction to put upon this ambiguous sentence. "We are to have Lord Norbury, my uncle, of course, Claudius Beresford, Bishop Ager, Squire Higgins, and the Misses Higgenboggan, to whom he has been introduced by Parson Lamb, and who like him greatly, though at first they were prejudiced against him."

"Absolutely I cannot," said O'Driscoll; "and I'm sorry the Misses Higgenboggan, little as I esteem them, have been made acquainted with Shamado, whom I esteem still less. Have care of yourself, Lady Alicia; he prides himself on being a lady-killer, and indeed he literally is so. Adieu, *au revoir*." Lady Alicia made no response. With compressed lips and gloomy brow she sat musing as he ran lightly down the stairs:

"He does not care for me; he loves that odious girl, I can see it; but he shall rue it, or I'm a fool. If I cannot win his heart she shall not have the triumph, nor he the

satisfaction. I'll cross their path, or I'm not a Luttrell." So she pursued the theme, distilling from the cud of bitterness a subtle venom, to rankle in her bosom and empoison her heart, till the advent of fresh visitors for a while diverted her mind to other subjects.

Meanwhile, O'Driscoll, hurrying home, intent upon far other speculation, sought his mother, whom he found in the drawingroom, and at once proceeded to initiate her into his projects and wishes. Coming directly to the point, and without preamble, manifesting the entire confidence that subsisted between them, he said, in his usual off-hand way :

"Mother dear, I have a favour to ask ; will you grant it ?"

"Yes, Maurice, certainly, if in my power," as frankly responded Lady O'Driscoll, smiling with ineffable maternal tenderness and pride upon the bright, unclouded face before her. "What is it ?"

"I want you, mother, to call upon Miss Fitzpatrick, poor little thing, and show her some kindness and attention ; but I'm afraid you won't like to do it," he added, as he noticed her visage become overcast, while his own cheek tingled with an involuntary but very tell-tale blush. Lady O'Driscoll was of a nature most unselfish : she loved her son with a self-sacrificing devotion that never for an instant could put her pleasure in competition with his happiness ; hence, had he asked her for a few drops of her heart's blood her first thought would have been an act of compliance ; but now she hesitatingly paused, then made answer, grave and kind.

"My dear Maurice, I understand you ; and now listen to me. I know of no one except your own self that I think I could better like than Miss Fitzpatrick, nay, I feel pretty sure I could even dearly love her ; so I am no way surprised at your predilection for that nice and pleasing girl ; but, dear, recollect your position and hers : she is destitute, you have only a small income, precariously depending upon your health, your life, a thousand accidents of vicissitude and change. As a young, single man, it is no such terrible ordeal to face the brunt of fortune, but

how would it be were you encumbered, in addition to a helpless old mother, with a delicate young wife, and possibly an infant family. Oh! my son, I tremble at the bare idea of your taking upon yourself a burden that might overwhelm and crush you to the earth."

"Mother, what you say is not destitute of good logical acumen," returned her son; "nevertheless, in this topsy-turvy world, the chances are to the full as many to turn up trumps to a good card-player."

"No, Maurice," interrupted his mother, "not where the best card-players are pitted against sharpers and black-legs, who unscrupulously cheat them at every deal; the best card-players have no chance against such, and the world abounds with them."

"Yet we sometimes see upright and honourable men prosper and succeed," persisted the young man; "and, conscious as I am of my own abilities and strength, I do feel that if I were married to one whom I love it would operate as a double lever to stimulate and give renewed impetus to my energies; goaded by the spur of motive additionally excited, I would be equal to any emergency; and you know, besides, that our good friend, Foster, has pledged himself to use his interest, which is great in parliament, to obtain for me some good appointment, out of which I would insure my life for a premium that would leave you, my wife, and children (if any) comfortable, in the event of any unforeseen casualty. Oh, yes, I'm quite sure Foster will get me something in parliament."

Lady O'Driscoll shook her head. She also added the clause, "If, indeed, a parliament be left to us, Maurice."

"Hush! to be sure it will," returned sanguine Maurice. "They may do their best, but the country which is so strenuously against the measure will defy every effort to wrest from its grasp the shield of its defence."

Again Lady O'Driscoll premonitorily shook her head. "I know my country-people better than you do: they are stubborn in purpose, and wicked enough to be unscrupulous of the means by which to achieve it. The lion is a fine animal, brave and formidable enough, too; but

see him at bay, surrounded by dogs of every degree, from the cur to the mastiff, assailing him front, flank, and rear, with roar and snarl, lacerating claw, and rending fangs, 'tis not difficult to judge the issue. However, since you wish me to call on Miss Fitzpatrick, and to show her attention, all I ask is that you will give this day seriously to consider the prudence of the step, and if to-morrow you be of the same mind, after duly weighing all I have said on the subject, I shall see her, and perhaps carry her home with me to dinner. How unfortunate," she soliloquised, "her principle was opposed to her interest in the matter of her uncle's will; yet one cannot but respect the independence of mind she has shown, however we may deprecate its wisdom; and I think it was unkind of the aunts to cast her adrift so. I daresay they will be quite offended at my officious patronage of their refractory niece."

"Oh, mother, my precious!" cried Maurice, in haste, "don't have those grimalkins mixed up in our transactions on any account."

"Fie, fie, Maurice!" smiled Lady O'Driscoll; "I thought you had liked the Misses Warbeck?"

"Now, mother, I pray, don't mock me. I had been beguiled with the delusion that, as the relatives of one so peerless as Alphonse Fitzpatrick, they must have been persons of intrinsic merit; but it was dissipated when I soon made the discovery that they only shone by reflected lustre. I'm thankful to you for so kindly meeting my wishes. I shall think over what you have said, and yet I feel it will not change my mind."

O'Driscoll prophesied truly, and the following day Lady O'Driscoll's card was handed to Alphonse Fitzpatrick, as pale, weary, and heart-sick, she sat with her pupils beside a piano, sadly out of tune, like her own self, striving to explain the abstruse science of sharps and flats, minims and quavers, to very obtuse comprehensions, and listening to notes of jarring discord that distracted her brain, strummed by doughy fingers of uninitiated novices upon the instrument. Looking at the card, she rose to go down to the visitor, then paused in trepidation, arrested

by the intrusive suggestion of her personal equipment. Acting upon a sudden impulse, she threw off her cap and apron, and had proceeded as far as the door, when Jemima Hodgens, who sat in the room to see that time was not loitered, while she herself pored over a novel, called out :

"Where are you going, Miss Fitzpatrick?"

"To a lady in the parlour who has sent me this card. She is a friend ; I know her."

"Stay!" cried Jemima, taking the card and looking at it ; "wait till I see Miss Hodgens ; I don't think she would be pleased at your leaving the music lesson." She left the room with the card, and in a few minutes returned with Miss Hodgens, who with fiery visage, giving emphasis to her shrill voice, exclaimed :

"Certainly not, Miss Fitzpatrick ; I wonder at your presumption. Go back to your pupils ; our teachers cannot be allowed to have visitors coming taking up their time, and turning their heads. Who is this person that calls herself Lady O'Driscoll ? I must go down and see who she is that could demean herself by acting so unlike a lady as to call upon any subordinate in another person's house. One can't be too cautious who has the care of children ; and there are so many counterfeits going. That will do, go back to your employment." Alphonse, utterly browbeaten and abashed, submissively obeyed in silence. In truth, she was too sad and dispirited to care much about the matter ; so she reseated herself, while Miss Hodgens, who, falling into the mistake of some persons of a certain class, who think to inspire exalted notions of their consequence by a pretentious demeanour, stalked arrogantly into the apartment where Lady O'Driscoll, simple and unassuming in mien and dress, sat quietly awaiting her young friend.

"You wish to see Miss Fitzpatrick?" said Miss Hodgens, accosting the lady with a stately air, meant to be overawing ; but the lady, not overawed, or evincing the least *emprossement*, placidly responded: "Yes."

"Then, ma'am, I must beg to inform you I never allow the young persons in my service to receive visits, and squander in any way the time that should be devoted

their pupils." Miss Hodgens's eye, while she spoke, shifted, and her voice imperceptibly toned down; for she was somehow beginning herself to feel unaccountably overawed before the serene, unflinching gaze that probed her while she spoke, and, less dogmatically, she continued: "If you have any business with the girl, or message to her, I don't mind letting you see her for a few minutes, or I can take it to her."

Lady O'Driscoll stood up. "Thank you, no," she said, with a quiet *hauteur* that at once brought down the schoolmistress to her level. "I'm sorry I should have disturbed you. Pray excuse my ignorance of the rule of your seminary. I shall write to Miss Fitzpatrick. Good-morning."

Miss Hodgens, not possessed of tact sufficient to remedy what she clearly saw now was a blunder—for no one revered station, wealth, and title more than she did—stood dumbfounded, gazing after the vanishing embodiment of these goods and possessions, who departed in a spirit of intensely excited sympathy for poor Alphonse, combined with a resolute determination to befriend her now at any cost, when she should have consulted and arranged the programme with Maurice, to whom that evening she detailed the result of her visit, and inveighed, in language less compromising, against the heartlessness of the Misses Higgenboggan in consigning that young creature to such a destiny, interspersed with animadversions upon the instability of friends in general, and of relations in particular, with some allusions also to the inconstancy of men, as exemplified in the conduct of Guildford Colandisk, whom she had always believed to be an honourable man, but who had proved himself a mere fortune-hunter, who could break the most solemn engagement into which a man could enter from mercenary motives, and she wound up by predicting that he would not have better luck for it, and that Caroline Damer was not a person would long, she thought, please his fastidious taste. "I shall now, Maurice, write, and ask Alphonse to tea to-morrow, with a few more, and I lay you any wager the dear child won't be allowed to come," she added, sitting down to her desk,

while Maurice moped away over his disappointment and a glass of wine.

Lady O'Driscoll's second prediction won the wager. Alphonse was not allowed to accept the invitation.

CHAPTER XVI.

DISAPPOINTMENTS.

"At God's forges incandescent
Mighty hammers beat incessant :
These are but the flying sparks."

LONGFELLOW.

" — But they that stand,
When not a beacon o'er the wave remains,
Linked but to perish with a ruined land.
Where freedom dies with them—call these
A martyr-band."

LAST CONSTANTINE.

THE twelfth of March, '98, was a day fraught with disastrous events in the annals of Ireland. As Miles and Hugh O'Byrne had too surely foreseen and predicted, the lofty projects of those whose ardent bosoms had swelled high with noble aspirations, and expanded with magnanimous impulse to raise the oppressed, to do battle for a nation's liberty and rights, and redress a suffering people's mighty wrongs, were frustrated by the treason of crafty spirits, who, not only destitute of God-like instincts, and human sympathies allied to the divine, but animated with all the fell, sordid, merciless nature that had marked the ignoble character of the mercenary Iscariot, and were conspicuously displayed in the soul of the grovelling traffickers in the slave-markets of Africa, and lured to ruin, even as ancient mariners, steering with auspicious gales, by the songs of sirens, and trained to their fall by the cajoling professions of flattering traitors, vile instruments

in the hands of intriguing statesmen, well paid to weave into death shrouds for patriots the filthy cobwebs spun in the loom of their cold, hard, and intricate brains. Twenty of the United Irish leaders, arrested by Major Sirr, were flung into noisome dungeons, many to expiate there with their lives the crime of loving their fatherland; but he, the chief of all, whose noble head was estimated by his foes at the value of a thousand pounds, warned by timely admonition, which yet he had rather yielded to than believe in, for the present escaped his comrades' doom, and, securely harboured in safe retreats, fenced by faithful bosoms, eluded the chase of human bloodhounds hot upon his track. But while the heart of the country, paralysed by this terrible assassin's stroke, so unforeseen and unexpected, a moment paused inert in suspended action, and the vampires of every degree, from Castlereagh to Reynolds the informer, that had seized upon the body were voraciously sucking its life-blood and draining out its existence, a few there were who, helpless to aid or ameliorate the evil they witnessed and deplored, took refuge in silence and non-intervention, and more strenuously devoted their attention to their own individual concerns, far apart from the arena of politics. Of this number were Miles and Hugh O'Byrne and Maurice O'Driscoll, but especially the latter, whose occupation as foreign correspondent in a mercantile office engrossed every moment that was freely his own to dedicate to other pursuits, the chief of which was building a castle in the air, an Aladdin's palace, and fitting it up with costly decorations, to render it a meet temple to enshrine the idol, before whose altar continuously ascended the burning incense of his devotion, pure, generous, and leal as ever glowed in knightly bosom of old romance, for ideal paragon of all earthly and celestial perfection, the ever-recurring theme of his thoughts, the vision of his day-dream, that would not be exorcised, and that he did not want to exorcise, but, on the contrary, wooed to stay to gladden his heart with her smile, to make music to his ear with the tone of her voice, to thrill to harmonious vibration his pulse by the mystic touch of her hand, in a word, to

dazzle him by the glamour, to enthrall him by the spell of fascination, was Alphonse Fitzpatrick. To win the enchantress to abide for ever, what would he not dare; to win her, love's priceless guerdon, what would he not achieve? Immutable in mind, strong in purpose, firm of will, nevertheless he seemed destined to feed the hunger and thirst of his heart upon the ambrosia and nectar of wildering imagination and idealism, for the fair, tangible impersonation of the shadowy phantom he pursued, came not within his reach. In vain he devised plans and projects to obtain an interview, and lay in wait for the chance of some casual *rencontre*. Day after day passed wearily by, and the look, the voice, the word, that were wont to wake strange echoes in his heart, the presence endowed with power so magical as to transfigure earth into Eden, and for which his spirit yearned with a wonderful, earnest longing, came not to the secret prayer of invocation.

It was Patrick's Day, and O'Driscoll, being dispensed from office duty in consequence of his friend and employer wishing to attend the levee at the Castle, set out with his mother, who had asked him to accompany her upon a shopping excursion. As slowly, arm-in-arm, they paced along by Grafton-street, was O'Driscoll's musing still of her, the charmed image of his fancy, and had thought the power, at length to substantiate itself, or eliminate out of dreamland, a form possessed of every attribute of palpable being? Twelve o'clock Mass was over in Clarendon-street chapel; the congregation, a poor and motley one, were streaming out in a continuous procession. Impeded in their progress, Lady O'Driscoll and her son slackened yet more their steps. Presently emerged a group of somewhat better-conditioned persons. Among them, but apart, walked one who, though unattractively arrayed in sable vesture, and of mien subdued and unpretentious, it needed Maurice no second glance to recognise the soft elegance of figure, the lithe, gliding motion of the easy, well-balanced step, the graceful pose of the head—all belonged to her alone.

"Mother!" eagerly he exclaimed, "there's Miss Fitzpatrick; let us overtake her!" And with a palpitating

heart and accelerated speed he urged forward his half-smiling yet rather anxious parent.

Alphonse had, while passing, dallied for an instant, with something of her former juvenile propensity, so often rebuked by her aunts as a vulgarism, to look at the shop windows. Some paintings had attracted her curiosity, which, having satisfied, she turned away and blushed crimson with shame. Meeting face to face the O'Driscolls, witnesses of her puerile transgression, and vainly invoking to her aid her wonted ready tact to extricate herself from a dilemma, she stood, shy and embarrassed, while Lady O'Driscoll, solicitously scanning her countenance, addressed some words of courtesy, and Maurice, tongue-tied, revelled in the beatitude of the moment, basking in an ecstasy that glorified the atmosphere around him, and converted into a fragment of paradise the identical spot on which he stood, with its surroundings, henceforth to be classic ground to him.

In reply to Lady O'Driscoll's kind and maternal accost, "My dear child, I am so happy to meet you, and you must now come home to luncheon with us," Alphonse, with her old frank smile, but with less of the pleasant ring in her silvery accents, said, in tone that sounded rather plaintive:

"I am very glad to meet you, too, Lady O'Driscoll, and I thank you very sincerely for your past kindness in calling on me and inviting me to your house. I was, believe me, very sorry to have been obliged then, as now, to decline what would have given me so much pleasure; but, you know, I am not my own mistress."

"But you are not decreed to be anyone's slave, Miss Fitzpatrick," cried Maurice, recovering the use of his tongue in a burst of chivalrous enthusiasm. "Pray, gratify my mother by acceding to her present request."

"Oh, you don't know;—I dare not;—the Misses Hodgens would be so displeased!" she murmured, in broken sentences, and with an earnest, appealing glance. "I had ever so much difficulty to get leave to go to Mass to-day," she added, with simple candour. "It is a holiday of obligation, you know, and I could only get by promising to give lessons in French and Italian, and not to delay out."

"That is very hard," said Lady O'Driscoll. "I wonder at your aunts to permit you to be denied air and recreation necessary for health, or your abilities to be overtaxed by labour. You are not looking at all so well as you used."

"I have not seen my aunts since I left them, and I rather think they are pleased at Miss Hodgens being very strict, in the hope that I may repent of what they call my error," smiled Alphonse. "You know I displeased them: they were very angry about Uncle Jeremiah's will; but you know, Lady O'Driscoll, I could not help it," she added, pathetically. "And the loss was mine—all mine," she murmured, in sorrowful abstraction and with downcast eyes.

"Well, dear, I don't like to expose you to blame by pressing you to act against your judgment," began Lady O'Driscoll, when Maurice stoutly interposed:

"Nonsense, mother! we'll say we ran away with her, and by actually perpetrating this deed of violence exonerate her from all censure." He made sign for a hackney coach which drove up.

"There is no resisting such an incorrigible despot," smiled his mother, as he handed her in.

"Oh, dear!" exclaimed Alphonse, looking quite dismayed and a little amused, as she found herself *sans cérémonie* deposited beside her ladyship opposite Maurice, gravely complacent, as the vehicle set off. "You can't exonerate me from being a consenting party in the transaction, since I shall not demand your transmission to Van Diemen's Land. I must only make up my mind to suffer the penalty that follows pleasure, and make the most of my present enjoyment."

"That is the very quintessence of philosophy," said he, laughing. "But don't let suggestions of future consideration mar your peace, since I shall take care that my lady mother and I only shall be amenable to reproof in the matter. I hope you have not leased yourself for any long term to those very exacting and unreasonable ladies, the Muses of history, languages, and music?"

"I don't know," said Alphonse. "I was glad to find

a home with persons whom I had known. I suppose I can do nothing better than remain with them, if they will keep me. Mr. Hugh O'Byrne—I think he is a friend of yours, Mr. O'Driscoll?—whom I met there one day he came to make inquiries about a little girl—his sister—said, during a few moments I was alone with him, that a relative of his—Madame Byrne of Cabinteely—was desirous of finding a Catholic lady to educate her little girls, and that if I would authorise him, he would introduce me there; but I hesitated; I felt afraid to go among strangers; and then Miss Hodgens came in, and there was no more about it."

"I know Madame Byrne of Cabinteely. You would be very happy domiciled in that family, where you would be more in your position than where you are," said Lady O'Driscoll; "more comfortable and independent in every way, and more agreeably to yourself, I have no doubt, associated with ladies."

Before Alphonse, who gave earnest attention to her words, could make any reply, the coach drew up in Kildare-street, and Maurice, springing out, gallantly presented his hand to assist the ladies.

"My dear," said Lady O'Driscoll, addressing her son, as they sat at luncheon, and for a moment diverting his courteous attention from their guest, "have you lately seen your friend, Hugh O'Byrne? I am greatly afraid, from some hints dropped by Lady Alicia Luttrell, when she visited here yesterday, that he and his brother are suspected of complicity with the United Irishmen, and to be suspected now-a-days is to be doomed. You know some of his kinsmen engaged in the business have been among those arrested the other day by Major Sirr."

"They can prove nothing against Hugh O'Byrne or his brother save relationship to some and personal friendship with others of the party," returned Maurice, putting wine into Alphonse's glass. "Nevertheless—let me send you some chicken, mother—knowing, as I do, that malignity and rancour would perversely construe even appearance of sympathy with the proscribed into damning evidence against them, without avail to their friends, I

have counselled Hugh to appear as much as possible in public, and to obtain an invitation to Lady Castlereagh's approaching masquerade, which is, I understand, to be a great affair."

"Will you go?" asked Alphonse.

"I don't know. I like that kind of thing very well, and should have no difficulty in procuring a passport. Yet does it not appear an ill-chosen season for banquet and pageantry when the country is in a state so awful, on the very verge of some appalling tornado, with wreck and bloodshed on every side we turn? Methinks it more a time for serious reflection than ill-starred mirth. But come," he more cheerfully added, observing Alphonse's drooping brow and fading cheek, as the theme awakened dormant thoughts of the late calamities that had befallen her brother Patrick, "let us eschew for the present melancholy dissertation, which can serve no purpose, and give thanks that while our own hands are clean we belong to the party who are good enough to dirty theirs abominably for our benefit and protection—Camden, Castlereagh, their whippers-in, and all the thug faction, to boot.—May I give you a little jelly?"

"What is Miles O'Byrne so long doing in the country, I wonder?" said Lady O'Driscoll, with pondering aspect. "I have heard some whisper that he certainly is in some secret league against Government."

"The wish, I daresay, fathers the thought with those who have disseminated such whisper," said Maurice; "but I am in a position to give a better account of his proceedings, which are, first, that he is in treaty with some person for the disposal of a small landed property down there, it being his intention to settle in America, to some part of which an elder brother of his emigrated many years ago, and has not since been heard of; secondly, he is interested in guarding, by his advice and authority, some junior members of his family from being trepanned by artful agents into what he considers a wild insurrection concocted by Government as a pretext for another wholesale slaughter of the people and confiscation of the country. Would you believe, mother, that no later than ten days

ago those unblushing miscreants, Reynolds, Armstrong, Oliver, and Castles had the audacity to strive to cajole Hugh and me to join the society they were hired to betray a few days later; and I protest that any younger and less wary men hearing them expatiate on the duty of patriotism, and the glory of fame, with all the paraphernalia of recompense so vividly portrayed by these Machiavelians, had surely been fooled to their destruction. You would not like to see me a manslayer, or to know that I had the blood of a fellow on my hands," he turned smiling to Alphonse, whose presence gave fluency to his tongue. "And yet I will not promise you that should any one of these ruffianly minions, by whatsoever accident, appear before me in the mood I now am, I would not be a murderer."

"At least a homicide," smiled Alphonse; "and I should feel wicked enough to be your accomplice. I hope poor Lord Edward Fitzgerald will have the good fortune to escape," she continued, drawing on her gloves. He shook his head dubiously.

"There are men with ragged coats and empty stomachs in this city whom, I am proud of my kind to say, will not, for the golden shower that would buy them comfort for the residue of their lives, sell to his foes one hair of Lord Edward's noble head; others there be, clothed in purple and fine linen, and feasting like Dives, who would traffic in the last drop of the Geraldine's heart's blood for a smile of Castle patronage, much less a thousand pounds in shining lucre. My only comfort is the thought that they are not men, but fiends made incarnate, demons fitted with human form, to do hell's behest among men; from such as these, gifted with diabolic ingenuity and inspiration, we can only pray—'Lord deliver the hunted patriot.' But you are not going?"

"Oh, yes! pray do not detain me longer; I'm afraid to stay," pleaded Alphonse, with entreaty. "You would not get me blame?"

"Don't, Maurice, don't press her against her wish," cried Lady O'Driscoll, rising to facilitate her departure. "We are so much obliged to you, dear, for giving us so great pleasure, which we must contrive some means to have renewed often."

"Thank you, dear Lady O'Driscoll; I am indeed very grateful for your kindness," murmured Alphonse, with dewy eyes lifted to the soft countenance beaming upon her as she said "Farewell."

"You will then allow me the pleasure of seeing you home?" said Maurice, getting his hat. She hesitated, and was about to demur, when he whispered, as his mother withdrew: "I have something I wish to say to you; permit me." He opened the door, and they were in the street. "Take my arm, and let us walk once round the Green." There was something in his look which was discomposed, and his manner, which was abrupt, that frightened her, and commanded unreasoning compliance. "Had he any bad news to break to her," was the swift thought suggested by her apprehension, as inquisitively she fixed her dark eyes upon his face, to read beforehand what she might have to learn. "I know not, Miss Fitzpatrick—pray, let me call you Alphonse; it is less formal"—he commenced, as soon as they had gained the more open and less crowded causeway, and his tone was low and hurried: "what you will think of me, or what construction you may put on what I am going to say, since even to myself it seems an awkward time and place, nay, even perhaps to you premature, and the sole reason or extenuation I can offer for it, this, my impulsive temperament that cannot long brook suspense, and my dread of letting slip a golden opportunity that might not soon again present itself of saying, Alphonse, how blessed I were, to be granted the proud privilege of ministering to your happiness; were it mine to snatch you from this odious bondage, so unmeet and galling, and set you in a position which, though as yet humble enough, is one of independence; what unspeakable felicity were mine to hear from your lips a consent to my making you happy as my heart would aspire to!" He paused a moment, while she gazed with disconcerted and puzzled mien, and as yet mystified as to the meaning implied by his speech; but it was not long. Perceiving her bewildered perplexity, he resumed, with a succinct plainness that needed no interpretation, and admitted of no surmise. "Yes, Alphonse, it

may surprise you the avowal I am about to make, but it is not less true that long, very long, I have loved you. From the hour that I first beheld your sweet face, you have been my heart's elected queen; it has never paid allegiance, and never will to any other. Dear, what ails you?"

"Oh! pray, say no more; let me go home!" faltered Alphonse, shrinking aghast, with the heart's recoil from the agony inflicted by the touch that probed the arrow yet festering within it; the keen-shafted memory of one who had spoken words like these, and yet reeking not of the wound, the gaping wound and sore void left by the torn-up root of love and trust, with all their scattered flowers, had cruelly transferred to another his plighted troth, and no later than yesternorn, before the altar, had ratified to another bride the faith sworn to her. Maurice had happened on an evil moment to disclose his love, and now disappointed, baffled, angry, and yet sorry for the unmistakable expression of pain too evidently depicted in her suffering countenance, he stood a moment, mutely confounded, then said, in low, resolute accents:

"I'm sorry if I have distressed you, dear Alphonse; for whether you will it or not, I cannot help expressing myself, and saying you are, and ever will be, very dear to me. Now that I have said so, and you know it, I shall tease you no more with my foolish presumption, and shall only beg you to forgive me, and at least not withdraw your friendship for my indiscretion."

"Oh, you are very good, and I know I ought to thank and feel grateful to you, Mr. O'Driscoll; but—but pray don't speak of it again; I am——"

"Engaged to another, perhaps?" said he, bluntly, filling up the pause, as a jealous pang shooting from his heart's quiver lighted on the head of Hugh O'Byrne.

"Oh, no, no! nor shall ever be," she emphatically cried, with a very passionate sob, as she quickly ran up the steps and disappeared in the gloomy passage of Miss Hodgens's seminary, leaving him standing without in the sunshine, relieved in spirit to find that his friend was not his rival in the affection of an object sensibly augmented in value by inaccessibility of attainment, yet not to be despaired of,

since he had no faith whatever in engagements of celibacy outside of convents of which he knew but little; and blaming Guildford Colandisk's recreancy as the primary and natural cause, and his own ill-judged haste as the just and secondary cause of his failure, and, upon the whole, returning home in renovated spirits, while the lady of his love, in tears and confusion, was already running the gauntlet of penance, alone and unprotected, bravely defending her assailed reputation, and heroically enduring the martyrdom of taunt, jibe, and sneer, whose burning coals had been ignited and fanned by him.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE VILLAGE OF TUBBER—SLIEVE GADDOE.

"Aye, 'tis thus,
Oppression fans th' imperishable flame
With most unconscious hands. No praise
Be hers for what she blindly works! When
Slavery's cup o'erflows its bounds, the creeping poison meant
To dull our senses, through each burning vein
Pours fever, sending a delirious strength,
To burst man's fetters."

HEMANS.

SOMEWHAT remotely from the town of Dunlavin, picturesquely situated in the vicinity of Hollywood and Dunard, upon the Slaney, at the base of Slieve Gadoo, a lofty mountain, whose elevation exceeds two thousand feet, and which extends from the valley of the King's River to the Glen of Imale, stood, in the spring of the year '98, the little village of Tubber Glen More,* of which, in the autumn of the same year, nought but wrecked mud-walls remained, and of these wretched mementoes of devastated homesteads, massacre, pillage, and ruin, not even a vestige now marks the desolate site. In its general features this

* The wall of the great glen.

humble locality differed not much from the generality of its class in the country, being characterised by indigence and squalor. Miserable sheds, unfit to shelter animals; ragged inmates; idle and noisy children; pigs, poultry, dunghills and duck-pools, prevailed here, and flourished, as elsewhere, under certain malign influences, calculated to develop the possibility of human beings, gifted with immortal souls, capable of refined instincts and lofty aspirations, endowed frequently with intellectual minds and physical beauty, being crushed down, till every attribute of the Divine image seems to be utterly stamped out of the begrimed aspect, or smothered in the abyss of external degradation into which they are plunged, without hope, to wallow a brief span, and decay into the dust from whence they sprung. "Oh, but these are mere Irish, degenerate beings of the Celtic race, whose nature is selfish, and tending to the downward slide," argues the physiologist, who would expound by philosophic theory of his own the law of cause and effect; "an inferior order of creatures, designed, like the beasts of the field, for the sole use and benefit of their oppressors." But fatal to their deist conclusion is the fact on the page of history, that largely interspersed among the rabble of O's and Mac's of Milesian descent were to be found, in plight not more befitting, the posterity of men bearing the ancestral names of a proud Anglo-Norman lineage, and in whose veins flowed the blood of De Burgos, De Lacey, De Cogans, Prendergasts, Berminghams, Fitzsimons, and the brave pioneers whose stout arms first opened, by dint of many a hard blow, the gates of the Western Isle to future hordes of British freebooters. We must seek other solution for the mystery that had reconciled a large percentage of the population to the broken thatch, the mud-floor, apertures for light and air stuffed with rags, a sod of turf on the hearth, and a shock of straw in a corner, dignified by the appellation of fire and bed; in effect, the owners of these habitations are men and women, who keep body and soul together by chance jobs of work. Industrious they would all be, but regular employment they have none; and for labour without requital there is no motive

to stimulate to exertion. Contrasting with the bitter lot of those half-starved denizens of noisome hovels, at whose doors they lounge, listless and apathetic, with folded arms and half-covered limbs, here and there dotting the mountain side or the roadway, might have been seen, peeping through hedge-rows, gay with hawthorn, woodbine, and wild roses, a cosy sheiling, whose new thatch, white walls, glazed lattice, and trim garden betokened of better circumstances; and in those domiciles of men engaged in some avocation whose remuneration, though scanty enough, is steady, a marked and wonderful distinction, within doors as well as without, proves that the native (so deemed) predilection for unsightly misery is more the result of accidental pressure than of indigenous taste. There are visible glimpses of a struggle upwards; more thrift, much order and cleanliness; a tendency to set off the person by occasional dress of showy print, a shawl of flashy design, and bonnet smartly trimmed with bows and ribbons, is also manifest among the female portion of the families; dirty faces, dishevelled hair, and tattered garments are rarely witnessed hanging about the threshold of the open door. Knitting, spinning, or some kind of needle or other work is generally in hand, and a few cows, ponies, goats, and quantities of poultry, with various implements of husbandry, afford many indications of humble affluence lavished upon a handful out of the mass of deplorable wretchedness around.

Prominent among the most well-to-do of these aristocrats of the neighbourhood was the sheiling of Thady Doyle the carpenter, who held, in addition to his trade, a short lease of a couple of acres of land, which his sons tilled, and five cows, which grazed upon the commons, and which his daughters milked, while his wife, a comely, rosy-cheeked, bright-eyed woman of about five-and-forty, tended the small dairy, helped to churn, to make the butter, fed the fowl, scoured the pails and noggins, assisted also in due season to sow and dig the potatoes, cut and bind the corn, make the hay, go with her daughters to patterns, fairs, and markets, and, in fact, from the plough to the needle, put her hand to every sort of work at a call.

Clean, buxom, bustling with the smile of good-humour ever upon her open countenance, and a ready laugh and cheery word ever upon her flexible lips, with a hand ever open to bestow an alms upon the needy suppliant, or to do a kind turn to a neighbour, Moll Doyle was the idol of her husband and family, and far and near looked up to with a respect and love by the village that many a wealthy dame of high estate might have envied, but could not command.

It was a Saturday night, and her week's labour came to a close. Moll Doyle sat on a three-legged stool beside the bright turf fire, burning on the clean-swept hearth, in company with Rose O'Brien, a friend who had just dropped in on her way home with some meal from the village huxtery; a saucepan of potatoes was boiling on the fire for the supper of the family upon their return from their work; but Moll, who had rather a weakness for strong tea and hot griddle cake, with fresh butter and new-laid eggs, was in the act of enjoying the above stimulating beverage, which cheers without inebriating, and its condiments, which extravagance she also justified to herself, and had her plea admitted by her fond family, upon the score of delicacy, though in what particular Moll could demonstrate failure of health, would have puzzled a college of physicians to make out, and probably herself to define, save, perhaps, in that she could not keep equal pace with others over the mealy esculents and noggins of thick milk, as of yore; be that as it may, her claim to the indulgence was freely granted. Moll was seated opposite her friend, at a small white deal table, and as her eyes complacently wandered—for they had a roving expression, as if ever more in quest of something to do—over the well-scoured chairs and stools ranged along the white-washed walls, and glistening in the sunbeams that freely entered with the breeze that wafted the odour of apple-blossoms, hawthorn, and a thousand fragrant aromas of mountain-heath and spring verdure, through the open door, the dresser lined with polished pewter and blue and yellow "chany," and the wicker-basket piled with the newly ironed shirts and gowns for the Sunday's adornment of her good man and the childhre, Moll felt that she had earned the right to enjoy

her luxuries, and with a look of supreme happiness she seized the raking pot of tea, and filled out for herself and friend a teacup a-piece, which said "Tae-cups" held something over a pint each of black essence of Congou, seasoned with good cream, and brown "Jamaiky sugar." As soon as the pot was replenished with hot water, for a second relay, and set to stew upon the hob, Moll deposited, first upon her guest's plate, and then upon her own, squares of hot cake, weighing about a pound each, and steeped in butter, for their light evening repast. Meanwhile, Rose O'Brien, an elderly woman of less well-to-do outward appearance, wrapt in a faded gray woollen mantle, and on her head a white cap, deeply frilled, and tied down with a red handkerchief, squatted on the hearth, and smoked in silence a *dudeen*, or short pipe, which was her unfailing panacea for every trouble, the never-absent companion of her loneliness, and indeed her chief occupation of time, abroad or at home. Moll Doyle was the first to break silence, after a pause, and said:

"An' so, honey, yez don't like the new lan'lord that's coome over yez beyant?" Rose lifted her pondering gray eyes to the speaker, knocked the ashes from her pipe, which she deposited in a capacious pocket, drew forward a stool to the table, and rising to place herself thereat, made response:

"Musha, sorra worse, Molly, barrin' Jones o' the Manor, an' Squire Cox, that the Donovans live undher. The new rector is a black Orangeman to the backbone, an' 'ud ate a Papist wid a grain o' salt;—an' I'm thinkin' it's little marcy thim that wants it 'll find at his hands, *ferriergare, alanna machree*."

"An' what sort is the young curate, Parson Pomfret—ain't that his name?"

"Well, *aroon*, there's much the same differ betune him an' every other one o' 'em as you'd find in a nest o' sarpint, some big and some little, an' some marked one way and some another, but all o' the one sort, venomous and bitther. It was only Tuesday last was a week, as myself, wid the geoman an' the childhre, wor at our dinner, whin in walks parson's father an' mother, wid a son and daughter, a

“‘Good-morra,’ siz he, in a civil sort o’ way. ‘I see yez are sthrivin’ to live,’ siz he, smilin’ at the childhre eatin’ the dhry pratees wid a grain o’ salt.

“‘An’ hard set, yer honour,’ siz the husband, standin’ up out o’ good manners. ‘The times is hard enough on us.’

“‘Ye shouldn’t be grumblin’ and flyin’ in the face o’ God, my good man,’ siz the squire; ‘ye’ve a nate little place, wid an acre o’ ground, an’ niver wor a day in arrear of yer rint or yer tithes, like the lazy, dhrunken vagabones around ye.’

“‘Thin siz Donough, ‘Musha, yer honour, it’s aisy to work whin a body has anythin’ to work on; we don’t begrudge our labour, an’ if all the crathurs had as much as ourselves—leastways employment—they wouldn’t be shortcomin’ wid the rint or the tithes.’

“‘Ay would they, the scoundrils,’ siz the squire; ‘they’d sooner rob, an’ stale, an’ dhrink, than work. Yer the only dacent man among ’em : not but what ye have a fine intherest in yer lase of ten years o’ as prime an acre o’ land as is in the counthry, barrin’ Doyle’s over the way, and the blacksmith Mooney; but, as I said before, ye deserve yer luck; an’ now,’ siz he, ‘I want ye, my good fellow, to sarve me a turn : I’m lookin’ everywhere among our frinds for votes for the Union, an’ I want yours.’

“‘Bedad, thin, sir,’ siz Donough, ‘I can’t give it ye.’

“‘An’ why not? Yis, ye can,’ siz he, throwin’ a shillin’ to one o’ the childhre. ‘Wouldn’t yez rayther eat beef an’ mutton than pratees for yer dinners?’ ‘By yer lave, sir,’ siz Donough, givin’ back the shillin’, an’ he dhrew himself up as grand as a prence, ‘it’s agin my conscience to sell my counthry.’ ‘Ah, thin, Liquorice,’ siz he, turnin’ to the young captain beside him, ‘d’ye hear this?’ siz he. ‘Why, fellow,’ siz he, ‘damn you an’ yer counthry!—what right has the likes o’ ye to counthry?—an’ as to conscience, what does a poor ignorant man like you know about the wrong or the right but what yer betthers tells ye?’ ‘By yer lave, sir,’ siz Donough, ‘I hear plinty o’ talk an’ speechin’ everywhere about the same Union, an’ I know all about it.’ ‘Thin, ye won’t vote?’ siz the squire. ‘I can’t, yer honour,’ siz Donough. ‘Very well, you ongrate-

ful blaguard,' siz the squire, frowning like murdher; 'wait a piece an' we'll tache ye what it is to have a will o' yer own, an' say no to yer masthers; an' the priests that's settin' ye in rebellion agin us an' the Government, we'll hang every one of 'em: d'ye hear that?—an' find a way to brake yer lase, maybe, into the bargain. Who owns that cottage yonder in the garden?' 'Christy Fitzsimon the letter-carrier, yer honour,' siz Donough; 'he owns a lase o' it from the last reethor, an' pays twelve pounds a year for it an' the field o' corn.' 'Thin he's o' the right sort?' siz the squire. 'No, sir,' says Donough. 'Thank God, he's a Roman, an' my own first cousin on the mother's side.' 'Humph!' siz the squire, 'I thought he was a dacint man. I'm afeard his lase isn't worth much, it's so aisy to make out a flaw agin a Papist, an' I know a man would pay double rint for the same.'

"'If we could persuade ye,' siz the lady then, turnin' to me, 'to sind yer childhre to the Sunday school, where they'd be ohristianized, clothed, and trained to be dacent mimbers o' society, as the Widow Bunyan, and the Bodkins, and Wilsons have done, I'd take some intherest in helpin' you, otherwise I cannot.' 'No, ma'am,' siz I, 'we couldn't expect it; an' wid the blessin' o' God an' the Vargin Mother, no child o' mine, for mate or male, good livin' or fine duds, 'll ever crass the thrashill o' a swaddling school.' 'Coom, my dear,' siz the lady, takin' the squire's arm; "'tain't no use our sthrivin' to reform the heathen; we must lave 'em to the ministhry of our dear Snarly-snap-at-us an' them as has the vocation like Happymanimus an' Baekgammon.' An' off they trotted, the lot, bad cess to 'em. Arrah, Molly, but this is beautiful tae;—muaha, where did ye buy it?"

"Why, thin, 'twas Misther Miles O'Byrne, good-luck to him, fetched me a couple pound from Dublin along wid the sugar. Is it oup tossin' ye are?"

"Ay, faix, sure I'd as lieve know my fortin'; an' I think we've dhrained the pot o' the second wather."

"Ay, sure; well let's thry our fortin'," cried Molly Doyle, drinking her second cup to the dregs, then twirling it

quickly round upside down to read the cabalistic signs of blotches and circles left by the deposit.

"There's a raven flyin' over the head o' two sthrangers comin' towards us, an' a black cloud forenint 'em, an' a dog runnin' at their heels on three legs an' without a tail. Now what's the manin' o' that, Molly?" cried Rose, prying into the depth of her cup.

"An' there's a shroud, an' a rope, an' a ring, an' a swarm o' bees flyin' afther a flock o' swallows, an' a man an' a dog pursuin' 'em," said Moll Doyle, scrutinising her omens with curious interest. "It's the curiousest thing! I wish we had old Latreen Daly here: she's a fine hand at the cups, an' can read them like prent."

"Musha," responded Rose, "I can tell ye as well as Latreen, for one thing: the shroud is for old Nancy, my mother-in-law; I heard the dead-watch ticking for the last three nights, and little Shelah, the crathur, passed the door this morn goin' for the priest, an' said she was very bad, an' she was afeard grandmother would never over it. Donough an' the childhre is gone up, and I'd a follied 'em, but the distance is so long and the impression on the heart so bad, I'm glad to rest a bit here on the way; an' sure it's little good or help my goin' 'll do, barrin' to pray for her, which I do with all the veins o' my heart, for she was a gay woman an' a good warrant to help a poor body, an' a friendly neighbour; an' though in the beginnin' she was agin Donough marryin' Rose Mooney, she soon come round, an' was good to the childre. She was more displased intirely wid her own daughther Maggie going off wid Terry O'Toole; howandiver, ye see it was a home to her whin the landlord turned her out, an' sold the bed from undher her, for one arrear of rint, the crathur; bad luck to the tithe proctor."

"Amin! I wondher what's the dead-watch, Rose?" said Moll Doyle, gazing vacantly a moment with dreamy eyes at the fortune-telling cup in her hand. "I heerd it myself seven nights runnin' before my own mother, the light o' glory to her, took sick at all. The first time I heerd it was faint and low, at a distance like; an' day by day it came stronger and nearer, till the night before the morn she died ye'd think it was a watch tickin' loud an' fast up

to my ear; an' she died after three days' lyin'; an' it was three year come next June I heerd the same agin for my misthress, Miss Effie's mother, God rest her sowl, an' though the docthor said as how her malady wouldn't signify, an' she'd be up in a little while, I knew betther when I heerd the watch, an' sure enough the fever never loosed its hould till her last breath, a week after. Musha, I wondher what is it at all?"

"A sperit, av coorse it is, Molly. Like the wraith an' the banshee that cooms to warn them as belongs to the rale ould blood o' the counthry, an' the ancient faith, to make ready for the call to the other world," said Rose, with a sagacious nod of her head, and in a tone of resolute conviction that had left no doubt upon a mind less disposed even to credulity than that of Moll Doyle, whose faith was simple, humble, and strong enough to realise the mystic in every phase, and give implicit credence to the supernatural, clothed in whatever aspect it might be presented to her intelligence. She was about to make some trite rejoinder still bearing upon a subject which possessed for her at all times intense interest, when Rose's lifted finger and warning whispered exclamation, "Whisht!" changed the theme, and she said, composedly: "It's only my little girls comin' from milkin'; we're quite* enough up here. Anyway, the place is so lonesome the soldier's doesn't throuble themselves to come out o' their way to tase us, an' the people is all so peaceable."

In effect, as Moll Doyle said, and while she was yet speaking, three young girls, the two foremost about sixteen and seventeen, carrying heavy pails on their heads, entered, and with a kindly

"God save ye, Rose," they proceeded to deposit their load in an inside room, the dairy, among the row of vessels ranged along the shelves, and filled with cream, waiting to be transferred to the churn, and metamorphosed into butter the following Monday. The third girl, a buxom lass of about thirteen, Euphemia's foster sister, followed with a couple of cans, which she set down in the same

* Quiet.

apartment; thence returning, she hastened to the fireplace, in a business-like manner, poked at the potatoes with a stick, and finding they were sufficiently soft to be edible, she swung the saucepan from the hearth, turned it into a tub through a sieve, which she replaced upon the hearth to steam, proceeded to clear away the tea-cups, and replace them with noggins of milk, and went through sundry evolutions connected with housekeeping in a stolid silence, broken by the encomiums of Rose O'Brien, and her assertion that she was "worth her skin full o' goold, an' he'd be the lucky man that 'ud get her;" and the mother's proud rejoinder, "that the man wasn't born 'ud be worthy of her Nelly." Unlike her sisters, whose comely faces, like their mother's, were ruddy, soft, and brimful of mirth and good humour, Nelly's rustic features were sedate, grave, and thoughtful; and her manner, taciturn and blunt, conveyed, at first sight, the impression of a sullen temper and morose disposition. Yet it was not so, for Nelly was at heart a romp, whose laugh was loudest when provoked by occasion, and whose dormant humour and love of frolic and adventure often nearly crazed the household, and plunged herself into difficulties not remote from absolute peril, in which it seemed her congenial element to disport as seabirds buffet with the tempest. In truth, hers was a masculine temperament, whose stoical bent found no sphere save in physical action and mental exercise; hence, as junior of the family, she was not spared her full share of the labour that devolved upon all, and frequently she assumed even more than her share, and executed the tasks of others with the same imperturbable spirit that claimed neither thanks nor guerdon. Unlike her seniors, whose short petticoats revealed their well-turned feet and ankles cased in stout shoes and yarn stockings, Nelly ran barefooted every day except Sunday, when she, too, stepped out to chapel in polished brogues and white yarn stockings, and wore a smart bonnet over fuzzy locks of rich auburn hair, curled by nature's own maternal hand, round a thick white neck and brawny shoulders, covered with a multi-coloured shawl, in lieu of the work-day check pinafore, and a calico frock, that vied

with theirs in glowing hues of roses, geraniums, poppies, and every flower that blooms in wild luxuriance on textile fabric, and as stiff and glossy as starch or iron could make them. Owing to her peculiar character, Nelly, though useful and esteemed, was not companionable in her family, or social with friends or acquaintances, of whom she made little account ; yet she was by no means destitute of human sympathies, and there was one kindred spirit that had engaged all her predilections, and severed from whom her yearning heart inclined to no other. What though social condition had marked a space between the patrician child and the peasant's daughter, and the limbs of one were clothed in becoming vesture, and those of the other swathed in homely stuff : of disparities such as these the discerning mind little recked, and Nelly Doyle and Euphemia O'Byrne from infancy were playmates and instinctive friends ; seldom apart, wherever one was the other was not far distant. Sometimes they quarrelled, as children do, yet in their very broils they kept close together, and appeared to get on all the better for the storm that had for a moment ruffled the horizon. Yet when the hour for separation had come, neither of them confessed by a tear the affliction they suffered in heart. A casual observer, indeed, would say the two moody-looking children had not much interest in each other ; but the more skilful interpreters of human nature would have construed otherwise ; and in very truth, though some months had elapsed since they parted, the children's thoughts were yet filled with each other, and likely enough it was the image of her quondam associate that yet continuing to intrude upon her memory caused Nelly to turn a deaf ear and abstracted face from the blandishments of all others.

The little girl, handy, silent, and thrifty, had spread the utensils for the family supper, and driven the fowl into the poultry-yard, while her eldest sister Mary kneaded a large bowl of dough, and her second sister, Kate, cut a piece off a flitch of bacon, which hung in the chimney for their Sunday entertainment, chatting and laughing the while with their mother and Rose, when with solemn

step and slow, reading his breviary, came along the road, and paused before the cottage door, the priest of the parish, an elderly man of venerable aspect, remarkable for a combined expression of firmness and sweetness, noble intellect and juvenile innocence, manhood's dignity and youthful hilarity, mirth and sadness in harmonising contrast.

"God save all here!" was his salutation, as closing his book he stood upon the threshold.

"Why, thin, the blessin' o' God, an' the Holy Mother, an' every saint on yer riverence!" exclaimed Mrs. Doyle, coming forward to receive the visitor, and dropping a respectful courtesy. "An', sure, yer welcome home from Dublin, Father Murphy, jewel;—an' it's proud my man an' the boys 'll be to give ye the *cead mille failthe*. Nelly, run, *alanna*, an' see is yer father comin', or any sign of the brothers;" and with eyes beaming the pride and pleasure of her honest heart, she wiped a chair with her apron and presented it to the clergyman, who entered and sat down, as Rose O'Brien, with a modest courtesy, escaped unnoticed, not to intrude upon the company.

"And how are my children, every inch of them?" smiled Father Murphy, his pleasant glance lighting upon each of the young flock grouped before him, and resting upon winsome Kate, who, half-blushing at her own audacity, gaily replied;

"Purty well, thank yer riverence;—but it's so long since we seen ye, we had a'most a right to forget ye."

"Get out, you wicked baggage! Is it forget in three weeks the priest that christened you, and taught you your catechism, and read-a-made-easy? What's the world coming to?" returned the visitor, with comical gravity. "You won't forget me, I warrant, one of those days when you'll want me to do something more for you;—oh, you may laugh; but I'll engage you won't. But I haven't forgotten you: see here!"—He held up a little prayer-book, bound in scarlet cloth, and gilt.—"What do you see? Do you like it, eh? Mind you pray for me: that's the thanks I like best. Come hither, Mary; I've no notion that Kate's to set herself up with airs, and pretend to be my favourite;

I couldn't countenance such vanity, and make fish of one and flesh of another." He handed Kate a coral rosary; and while the delighted girls expressed their overflowing gratitude in vehement thanks, and admired their *souvenirs*, he dived into the pocket of his soutane, and extracting therefrom a roll of brilliant pictures—one of the Madonna and another of the Holy Family—he presented them to Mrs. Doyle and Nelly, checking the ebullition of their gushing thanks, saying, curtly: "There, now, that will do; pray for me and pray for yourselves, for we are living in evil days: no man's life is safe; no man's innocence guarantees him from persecution."

"Thru for yer riverence," chimed in Mrs. Doyle; "there's bad work through the counthry—massacre, an' burnin, an' dhrivin' the people to ruination everywhere. Some o' the poor crathurs, left widout a shelther, have coom down here: an', widout manin' to boast, many a one 'ud av famished widout the bit we can spare from our own, an' others o' the neighbours that has it to give."

"Lord, reward you! Charity is a bank that pays good interest," replied the priest, with sadly musing brow. "But tell me about the boys;—what are they doing? Is Larry still sticking to the Latin?"

"Ooh, he's bint on't, yer riverence; an' won't it be the blissed day for his father an' me to see a child o' ours sarve the althar! Sure, myself 'ud but ax to see him priested, an' die happy next minit."

"And how is my boy Johnny?—is he as good as ever, the brave gossoon?"

"Musha, thin, yer riverence, Johnny's good enough; but his father and I isn't plaized that he's so set on Terry Cullan's eldest daughtther, Nano; for what'll they be but two beggars goin' together? *Ferriergare*, whin the crathurs is well off at home, an' has father an' mother to do for 'em, and doesn't know what hunger is, they have no thought in 'em at all, at all. But that ain't the worst, neither, for there's one Tom de Lacy coome down from Lucan here. He was a dacent, snug man till throuble fell upon him, an' he was flogged an' pitch-capped by Lord Carhampton's

ordhers. Anyhow, his charaather ain't now of the best, as I hear tell, yer riverence: he's one o' Rook's men;—an' this I can tell ye for truth, he aates the best o' mutton, for all. His cabin is worse nor a sty, and his motherless childhre the nakedest in the village; and in the same *boolie*, at midnight, the neighbours tell, meet lots o' bad company—forgers an' coiners, an' makers o' pikes;—for he has set up a forge o' his own, and he has put the comether on Johnny, who's a fine high-spirited boy, an' we don't like it. 'Where's the use,' his father says to him, 'o' goin' agin' the law, bad as it is, whin it only makes bad worse, an'll get yer neck into a halther?' Ooh, we might as well prache to a young colt gallopin' over the hills; he will folly his own way."

While the good woman was yet volubly pouring forth her troubles into the sympathising priest's attentive ear a sound of steps was heard approaching, a shadow fell upon the sunshine without, and presently a hale, jovial-looking man, of about fifty, with a saw in his hand and a basket of tools on hiss houlder, entered, followed by two younger men, one of whom carried a spade and pitchfork, which he set down in a corner, and stood a little backward; while his father, with hearty exuberance of pleasure, accosted Father Murphy:

"Why, thin, good-luck to yer riverence, but yer welcome as the flowers o' May, an' it's good for sore eyes to see ye; begorra, it's glad I am intirely to see yer riverence lookin' the piethure o' health. Whin did ye coome home, sir?"

"I came this afternoon, Thady; and it does my heart good to be at home again among my flock. And, Johnny, boy," turning to the owner of the spade, "how's your mother's son?"

"Thank yer riverence, I'm glad to see ye on the flure agin," returned the young man, looking rather sheepish and uneasy, beneath the gaze of the clear blue eye that closely scanned him as he stood.

"Ah, Johnny, God be with the days I rode you cock-horse on my knee, and put you on my shoulders to climb the apple trees, and search the bushes for birds'

nests. You've got a pair of shoulders now fitter to carry me. See the cheeks he's got!"

"Och, the Lord be praised, yer riverence!" cried Mrs. Doyle, ogling her first-born with maternal pride, "Johnny's a fine trenchman; an' what he puts undher his belt doesn't go into a bad skin."

"No, ma'am; he's no disgrace to the house," said Father Murphy, leisurely taking a pinch of snuff; "he's come of a good stock; and, please God, neither father nor mother nor anyone else will see him bring a blush to their cheek: I may go that bail for you, Johnny?"

"Plaize God, yer riverence," muttered Johnny, with a choking sensation in his throat and a dubious glance at his mother and sisters.

"Keep clear of bad company, my son; whatever you do, have no dealings, secret or underhand, with schemers and plotters of mischief, whose devil's mission is to lure the innocent to ruin; be deaf to evil counsellors, and keep your eyes wide open to avoid snares and pitfalls: hearken to the admonitions of the wise and the virtuous, and you'll never go astray. Nelly, my lass, what are you looking at so earnestly down the boreen?"

"A cartful o' people, yer riverence;—it is comin' up this way," said Nelly, in composed tone, and without changing her position.

"They must be goin' out o' their way to coome up here," said Mrs. Doyle, as with her daughters she moved to the door to take a view of the lumbering wain jolting up the narrow causeway;—"roon, *alanna*, and show them the straight road to the village."

Nelly darted away, but in a short time came flying back, out of breath. "It's herself, mother! it's herself, Miss 'Phemia!" And off she flew again like a wild bacchanalian, leaping and running with outstretched arms and dishevelled locks. Forthwith out came the whole Doyle family and congregated *en masse*. On the threshold they stood, with the good priest, who presently found himself in the thick of a motley crowd of strangers as the vehicle came to a standstill. Then, with a shout of astonishment, Moll Doyle recognised her cousin, Kitty Burke, and with an

exclamation of joy hastened to greet her, while Euphemia, quickly scrambling over great bundles, a few of which, dislodged by her impetuous movements, lost their balance and tumbled into the lane, and over the heads of children, some of whose necks she was in imminent danger of breaking, sprang into the open arms of Nelly, crying with exultation: "Now I'm home again; won't we have fun, Nell?" Same moment catching Father Murphy's eye of amazement fixed upon her, she shrunk back, whispering: "There's Father Frank, I declare, and he'll go straight and tell Miles. Let's run on; maybe he won't remember me."

And away the two scampered, Moll Doyle the while screaming at the pitch of her voice: "Miss Effie, Miss Effie, *avourneen!* won't ye spake a word to old nurse, *alanna?* Och, musha, musha!"

CHAPTER XVIII.

MORNING, NOON, AND NIGHT OF THE SABBATH DAY ON
SLIEVE GADOE AND IN THE VILLAGE OF TUBBER.

"The multiplied and manifold afflictions
With which the aged and the dying saints
Have their death prefaced and their age embittered
Are but prophetic trumpets that proclaim
The second coming of our Lord on earth;
The evening wolves will be much more abroad
When we are near the evening of the world."

GILES COREY OF SALEM FARM.

It was the Sabbath day, and though no tuneful bell, proclaiming the matin hour, summoned to early Mass in the little chapel of Slieve Gadoe the scattered denizens of the hills and glens, with the rising sun, harbinger of a glorious May Day, they came forth trooping from hamlets nestled in gorges and ravines, from sheilings buried in hawthorn bowers, from huts festooned in woodbine, cresting green raths laved by pellucid rippling streams, from cabins peeping through lilac and roses out of trim garden plots hedged with sweet-brier, watered by tiny springs and purling rivulets, and from black hovels rotting amid green festering swamps, arid common, naked rocks and labyrinths.

of yellow furze, in groups and pairs, and straggling units, all converging with speed to the well-known rendezvous, to offer up before the altar of God the first homage of their hearts in the adorable sacrifice 'of the Mass, which pious act of praise, worship, and thanksgiving duly rendered, the solitude first wakened by the morning song of the thrush, the goldfinch, and the lark, the echoes of hurrying footsteps, and the chance salutation of passing neighbours, was now alive with the merry voices, and the jocund laughter and din of home-returning pilgrims from the shrine of the temple, with the dew of the dawn yet upon their feet and the first light of the morn upon their brow. To the eye of a poet or a painter very picturesque and suggestive had been the panoramic beauty of the rural scene, as each successive *tableaux* passed along through bosky thickets of verdure, besprent with sparkling diamond drops, the tears of an early morning shower, over fields gay with clustering primroses, violets, and daffodils, yielding their tribute of ambrosial incense to greet the new-born day. It was the Sabbath-tide of holy rest and peace, and truce with toil and earthly care—symbol of the great Sabbath of eternity. All nature seemed as though fraught with an instinctive sense of the hour, hushed in adoration, with bright repose upon her tranquil brow, the cloudless blue firmament, like an aureola of splendour, beaming luminous around her, and no trace of the wintry wreck that had passed away; tempestuous clouds darkening her eye, wild hurricanes beating upon her head, tumultuous floods drenching her garments, hail, rain, snow-storm, and lightning scathing her fair form with affright, and banishing the smile from her faded cheek—all have vanished in the beatitude of her resurrection, and with the serenity of the summer on her visage and the warm glow of renovated life in every pulse and fibre of her being, life receiving and life imparting, she pours forth her spirit in benediction, solemn, silent, mysterious, to the great Creator of the universe.

It was the Sabbath-day; yet, alas! not for this a Sabbath in all human hearts, nor in all Christian homesteads, for over many the dark shadow of the cross was looming, and

over many the black pinions of the demon hovering blotted out the sun. Yet among a few, as yet exempt from the stroke of the arrows that were flying thick and fast around, there was one where glad hearts throbbed in union with nature's jubilee, and where high holiday was held rejoicing; conspicuous by its curling wreath of blue smoke and white thatch rising above the wilderness of green lanes that intersected the mountain, the hawthorn fences running zig-zag through corn-fields, meadows, potato-drills, and cabbage-plots, heather browsed by goats, and wild pastures cropped by cows, donkeys, geese, and pigs; the garden white with apple-blossoms, and the rural churchyard in the distance embowered in yew-trees and alder, solitude, and gloom, was the carpenter's humble dwelling—humble but not poverty-stricken, as is evident by its spacious extent, glazed and clean lattice windows, flower-beds among the cabbage plants, beehives among the fruit-trees, the well-sheltered cow-house, hayrick, and a peep into the interior, where a large company in *gala* trim of brilliant gowns, caps, ribbons, and kerchiefs, Sunday-coats with gilt buttons, and rainbow-coloured neckties, knee-breeches, and well-greased shoes with buckles, and blue yarn stockings, surrounded a table composed of many parts, and covered with a clean, coarse cloth, just ironed out of the bleach, foremost among whom might be recognised Euphemia, seated beside her friend Nelly, on the left of Moll Doyle, and opposite to Father Frank Murphy, who had actually come down, for the second time, to reason with the bold runaway on her imprudence, and induce her to repentance before he could venture to make known her escapade to Miles, and be responsible for mediating in her favour. It needed little urging, with such a point to be achieved, to prevail on him to stay and partake of the homely but good and plentiful repast spread before the guests; whereof the next in consequence was Kitty Burke, rigged out in a “beautiful yalla cotton prent, wid a green parsley leaf, the prisent that morn of her cousin, Moll Doyle, an’ fitted as if made a purpose for her, a red hankecher about her neck, an’ a lovely blue ribbon tyin’ her cap.” Yet though hilarity presided at the feast, and

laugh and joke prevailed, and the host was loquacious, and the hostess voluble, and the family eager to entertain and please, Kitty's heart was ill at rest. In vain she sought to throw off the weight that oppressed it; by ominous shakes of her head every time she encountered the merry eyes of Miss 'Phemia, whom, do all she could, she had failed to impress with the awe and dread that shook her own nerves at the thought of Mr. Miles and what he'd say and do when he'd come to know all about the business, as in course he soon would, convinced of her own blamelessness in the transaction, yet resolved not to lay the fault on the child, whose devotion flattered while it so terribly inconvenienced her. All her hope was that the priest would make peace among them; yet that, too, waxed faint when she marked the saucy smile with which the delinquent, her first qualm of apprehension subsided, met the mild, reproving eye of the pastor, and nudged Nelly, as much as to say, "Never fear, here I am, and here I'll stay, come what will." By-and-by, however, as business proceeded, and the distraction incidental to all dinners, from the hall to the cottage, supervened to divert her thoughts, Kitty's mood became more placid; she began by degrees to join in the laughter and merriment of the others. Though bashful and restrained in the presence of the clergy, she wondered at the unembarrassed ease with which her portly cousin, the hostess, called to Thady, making fearful inroads into a large piece of corned-beef, "Not to be stintin' the labour of his right hand," and to her guests, "Not to begrudge doin' justice to a boiled turkey and gammon, that wor fit for the table o' a prence, let alone the leg o' roast mutton to the fore, wid fine cauliflowers, an a potaty loaf made by her own hands."

"But you promised us a puddin', mother," said Nelly, who knew that Euphemia was fond of sweets.

"An' isn't there a gooseberry dumplin' bilin' on the fire, ready to be dished, honey? An' sure if I had known his riverence 'ud have condescended to stop wid us I'd have had somethin' else."

"You'd play the part of the tempter then, ma'am," said Father Murphy, as he peeled a potato. "Anyone

that doesn't find this fare enough is not worthy to sit with Christians."

"Have we anything to dhrink though?" demanded the host, helping Esther Mooney's children, as they sat on the hearth, to a trencher piled up with potatoes, beef, and cabbage.

"Lashins *galore* of beer Johnny fetched over last night," said Mrs. Doyle. "Larry, *avic*, fetch over the pitcher, and, Mary, set the wather on the fire for the punch." Thady and some others rubbed their hands and smiled complacently at mention of the nectar.

"Mick Mooney has got nothin' on his plate but a bone," cried Johnny, seizing the trencher and handing it to his father.

"A bone!—that won't put flesh on yer ribs, man," replied Thady, filling the empty platter, till its owner, with glistening eyes, cried out:

"There, there!—more power t'ye!—it's lashins, Thady!"

"Nano, *aroon*," continued Johnny, addressing a young girl, whom he had coaxed his sister Mary to get his mother's leave to ask to dinner, "yer not aitin'. Put by that cowl'd bit an' get a hot inside out. Kate, why don't you mind her?"

"How much business would ye have her mind at once?" cried Larry, the young candidate for holy orders, a remarkably fine handsome boy, in his fifteenth year, as with a smile of humour he stood, plate in hand, in the middle of the floor, demolishing the contents with a hearty appetite, there being no room for him at the crowded table.

His sister, whose reverence for the student was in abeyance, pending his novitiate, which might, after all, not develop an infallible vocation, looked at him, and sharply retorted: "Never heed, Larry, some that I know is wondherful quick at gettin' through a dale o' work in no time."

"I ain't so lucky," grinned Larry; "I've but a poor stomach."

"Musha ye have!" cried Kate, ironically. "I wondher where does all the mate go to, thin?"

"Take my advice, Larry, and don't die of consumption

so long as you can live by it, my son," said Father Murphy, with a hearty laugh at his own wit. "Effie, my child, I was going to offer you this turkey wing; but no, it isn't wing you want, little lady, nor cheek either: I'll send it to Nelly, that has neither one nor the other. Mrs. Doyle, may I help you ma'am?"

"No; I'm obliged to your riverence; but Kitty, if ye plaize, 'll take a leg, wid a piece o' the gam, while I go take up the dumplin'."

"And no one's minding Ned," suddenly exclaimed Euphemia, ignoring the surreptitious kick made by Kitty under the table to admonish her to silence, while, with face blushing from ear to ear, she endorsed Ned's assurance, that, "savin' yer prisence, he was ready to bust wid all he had put in, and another bit would fairly choke him." But, regardless of the consummation of such calamity, Euphemia persisted: "You'll have to make room for the dumplin'; and you've a long walk before you to fetch Hugh's letter to Miles."

"Are you quite sure of that, Miss Effie?" cried Father Murphy, with ambiguous smile. "Do you mean to accompany the ambassador?"

"Catch me! I'll not go near Miles till he sends me back word it's all right, and that I may stay with Moll, my old nurse, to my dying day."

"Lord love ye, *avourneen*, 'tis yerself is the pulse o' old Moll's heart, an' the apple o' her eye; an', sorra lie in it, but from the first day I took ye in my arms I loved ye all as one as my own," returned the foster-mother, with gratified smile, as she replaced the dishes removed by her daughter Mary with hot, clean plates, a magnificent dumpling, bursting with fruit, and a large jug of thick cream. "An' welcome ye are, *a suilish machree*, to the best o' the house, and why not?—but for all that, *aroon m'anima*, I'm afeard Misther Miles 'ill set his face agin it, for 'tain't yer place, *acushla*, among us, you that belongs to quality——"

"Oh, bother," interrupted Euphemia, with impatient gesture.

"That's just what I tell her," put in Kitty, waxing

courageous in speech, in her deprecation of Euphemia's hardihood. "An' I wouldn't be in her coat for a purse o' goold whin her brother coomes to hear of her runnin' away from the illigant school, where he put her to be educated like a lady."

"That was your fault, Kitty, and I'll tell Miles," smiled the culprit, with provoking humour.

"Go long wid ye; how dar ye say the like o' that, Miss, an' ye knowin' well I wouldn't countenance it no-how," retorted Kitty, ablaze with indignation, and looking certainly not benignant at Miss 'Phemia, who boldly responded:

"Yes, it's quite true, Kitty, and if you hadn't made me so fond of you I wouldn't have waited till now to scamper away after you from that horrid penitentiary; an' I won't go back to it for all you, or Miles, or Father Frank, or Nurse, or anyone else, can say, not a step. Give me some cream, Johnny."

"Very well, Miss Effie, very well, we'll see," said Father Frank, wiping his heated face in a large red and yellow handkerchief. "The world is spinning round like a teetotum since my young days, when little damsels would no more think of flouting their superiors and running from school than of taking a journey, like Baron Munchausen, to the moon."

"Do you believe he ever did any such thing, Father Frank?" cried Larry, presenting his plate for a slice of dumpling.

"There's no doubting anything moonstruck people may not have the temerity to undertake, and the misfortune sometimes to accomplish, by dint of risk and daring," returned Father Murphy.

"Then I must be moonstruck," said Larry; "for if there were a balloon setting off I'd set off among the aerial voyagers, to explore the kingdom of the Lilliputians, and ask no better fun."

"And Ned and I'd rather go to Robinson Crusoe's island, wouldn't you, Ned?" cried Euphemia, unconscious, in the beautiful simplicity of juvenile innocence, of the sarcastic smile of Father Murphy, the rebuking glance

of Kitty, and the amused gestures of all the others, happily still more unconscious, as her back was turned to the door, of the shadow of an awe-inspiring presence, pausing upon the open threshold, and, *pro tempo*, in blissful oblivion of the redoubted Miles and all sublunary care, till a sudden lull in the Babel of tongues round the board, an abrupt hush of the festive mirth, startled aspects, discomposed order, and a hurried signal from Nelly, springing up with flushed cheeks, warned her of the unwelcome intruder before his voice, deep and sonorous, fell upon her ear :

"Pray, good folk, don't let me disturb you !" exclaimed the courteous Miles, peering into the space which the outer sunshine, yet dazzling his eyes, had cast into comparative eclipse and gloom. "Passing, I just wished to bid you good-day." He did not explain that his visit was the result of a preconcerted plan between him and Father Frank, and by no means an accidental *impromptu*.

"Musha, good-morra an' good-luck to yer honour," responded the master of the dwelling, coming forward, with respectful salutation. "I'm glad to see yer honour lookin' so hearty, glory be to God !"

"Maybe yer honour 'ud walk in out o' the sun an' rest yerself ?—it's murtherin' hot intirely, so it is," said the good woman herself, coming forward and dropping a courtesy.

Miles appeared to hesitate. "Thank you ! It is indeed very warm, and I've had a long walk ; but I do not like to intrude upon you. I think you are at dinner ?"

"God bless you, sir, come in out of the sun," cried a well-known, cheery voice from the interior. "We have transferred the dinner to the mill, and you'll see nothing but empty platters."

"Oh, Father Frank, are you here ?" cried innocent Miles, walking in, hat in hand, and with polite obeisance to the guests.

"If yer honour wouldn't think it too bowld o' me, an' makin' too free," stammered Mrs. Doyle, addressing him, while he shook hands with the priest, "I'd ax ye to take a bit."

"No; many thanks!—Lie down, Dash;—to heel, sir, to heel," returned Miles, seating himself on the proffered chair, and calling a terrier dog, that went sniffing about the place to his knee.—"But I'll trouble you for a drink of water."

"Dickens resave the sup o' wather yer honour 'll dhrink undher Thady Doyle's roof, barrin' there's a sup o' the rale stuff in't," cried the hospitable host. "Cowld wather, *inagh*!—the onwholesomest thing a body could take in a hate. Coome, girls, jewel, clear away the dishes, an' fetch the bilin' wather and glasses;—coome on, Johnny, an' fetch the poteen, *avic*. Nelly!—where's Nelly?—bring the sugar, *alanna*!—Where is she?"

While the father was calling Nelly, the eyes of Miles were roaving equally in quest of Effie, whose voice he had distinctly heard as he approached the threshold, expressing a predilection for Robinson Crusoe's island with Ned Somebody, and at the same moment his glance lighted upon the strangers among the group of familiar faces, and rested, as if fascinated, upon those of Ned and his mother. For a few moments Kitty, though quailing at heart, sustained the probing test, keen as the spear-point of Ithuriel; then, unable any longer to endure the agony of suspense, she turned to her more intrepid offspring and said:

"Ye might as well, *avic*, give his honour the letther of the mather.

Thus counselled, Ned, with much fumbling, extracted the document from his pocket, and going forward, with a diffident stare at the dark, imperturbable face, he presented it, saying:

"By yer lave sir, it's from Misther Hugh." Miles received the epistle, opened, perused it leisurely, folded it, placed it in his waistcoat pocket, looked again at the boy, drank his spirits and water, and turned to reply to some indifferent observation of Father Murphy, who was mixing a jug of punch for the company.

Kitty's heart, unassuaged, palpitated more violently than ever, and glancing at Moll Doyle, she noticed that the placid visage wore an embarrassed expression. Meanwhile, where

was the absconded cause of her uneasiness lurking? She had not made her escape into any of the three rooms that opened into the kitchen, for every door was closed, and she did not encounter Miles to make an exit into the garden. "And Nelly, too. Musha, musha, weary on them for childhre."

She was musing, when all at once the terrier, who had broken loose from restraint, and was sniffing about, set up a clamour of yell and bark, in which a couple of yellow curs, picking bones upon the hearth, as suddenly harked in. The priest set up a shout of laughter, a cock overhead began to crow lustily, Mrs. Doyle screamed to her husband to put out the dogs, and Thady and Johnny, with racket and haloo, hastened to obey. Meanwhile every eye, directed to the cross-beams and rafters at the far end of the sheiling, discerned something larger than cocks, or hens, or turkeys nestled among the roosts in the dingy obscurity; and finding they were detected, down scrambled Larry and Nelly, ludicrously mortified, and shaking their fists in dumb pantomime at the terrier. Effie stoutly held her post, despite the hilarious laughter and shouts of Father Frank.

"Come down, Effie; you may as well capitulate, now you're discovered," and his cachinations of mirth waxed exuberant at the embarrassed looks of all the discomfited party. Miles, nibbling the point of a toothpick, meditatively guarding his dignity, considerably ruffled, from any unbecoming oscillation of its equilibrium, maintained an imposing solemnity of demeanour and a taciturn silence, till charged by the delinquent, exclaiming from her perch:

"I won't go down till Miles promises not to send me back to school, and not to be angry at my running away."

There was no response. Then up rose Kitty Burke, and coming out in the natural heroism of her character, deferentially, but with less of awe, she addressed Miles, pologetically in favour of the runaway:

"Musha, yer honour, we was all childhre onced, an' often I've said since it ain't no use sthrivin' to put an ould head on young showldhers; an' more betoken' Miss Effie ain't all out to blame, but myself, in the matther, since I

might have guessed what *pishroques* she'd have been on an' purvinted it."

"No, Kitty; you weren't to blame at all," shouted Euphemia, scrambling down from her perch. "I wouldn't stay after you were gone; and if I told you you'd have let the cat out of the bag; so I didn't tell her, Miles, but made off, got the morning coach, and overtook her on the road."

"Does Hugh know of your exploit?" grimly demanded Miles, ignoring the buzz of commendation around, that extolled in various phrase the "fine spirit of the child—the very moral of the ould stock."

"No; but he will when he goes to dine at the Hodgens' to-day; I suppose they'll tell him," said Euphemia, unconsciously drawing nearer.

Miles winced slightly at the intimation of Hugh's dining *en famille* with persons so uncongenial to his own fastidious taste; but he simply replied: "I should not wonder if he lost his reason when he hears of such an act of desperation, and in the present lawless state of the country. What am I to do with you, Effie?"

"Nothing at all, Miles," returned Euphemia, solving the problem in the most simple manner possible. "I'm very comfortable here, and I've got as much education as I want," she added, persuasively. "I can read and write as well as anyone, and cipher, and stitch; I can get lessons in dancing from Barney Casey, who comes down here to teach the boys and girls, and he's every bit as good as Monsieur D'Almain; and as for histories of England, and Greece, and Rome, I'm sure I don't care a pin about them, or what they did in them foreign parts: I'd rather read a story any day; and as for learning French, and grammar, and astronomy, it's all just loss of time: I'd rather be doing anything."

"Yes, I daresay; the rude life of a *villageoise* would be more congenial to your energetic mind than the *dolce far niente* elegance of the saloon," returned Miles, drily. "You would do beautifully in the back settlements of America as a woodcutter's wife." He turned as he spoke to look

at Ned Burke, who the while was regarding him with acute and penetrating observation.—“And so, my lad, you are transferred to my charge by my brother, Mr. Hugh O’Byrne, and, owing to some present cogent motives, must consider yourself at my disposal; wherefore, I shall require you now to follow me to my residence.”—Miles rose at the same time.—“Of course, Euphemia, I understand it to be your pleasure to abide with Nurse Doyle till we can make other arrangements. Father Murphy, if not inconvenient, I should be glad of your company a little way. Pray, my friends, excuse the trouble I have given you.” And with a courtly salutation to the humble company, who all arose *en masse*, with a kindly “God save yer honour!” “God bless yer honour!” “An’ shure it’s welcome ye are,” he withdrew, accompanied by Father Murphy, and attended by Ned, very submissive, but far from happy in his change of masters, and only solaced by a sympathising look from his mother, and a saucy smile from Euphemia, as she called after Miles:

“I’ll go over to see you to-morrow, Miles.”

Hardly were they out of sight round a curve of the hill when Shaun Beg O’Leary, the piper, was spied coming up the boreen, and hailed with an enthusiastic *cead mille faillthe* by a dozen eager voices. In an instant the dull stagnation of mirth and humour, occasioned by the depressing influence and magisterial presence of the grave, aristocratic visitor, vanished as snow thaws in sunshine: hilarity broke loose from freezing restraint. A tumbler of steaming punch was swiftly brewed for the disciple of the tuneful Muse; and, while inhaling and imbibing the aromatic nectar, he sat by the hearth, blithe bosoms and trim figures were pluming up, and making ready to trip in the merry dance, and away to the *glean-na-rinceadh** young men and maidens sped frolicking, to display their feats of grace on the light fantastic toe, and their powers of endurance by holding out to tire each other down in jig and reel. And long it was ere flagging energies, stimulated no more by the life-infusing strains of O’Leary’s

* Dancing-glen.

pipes, the vanquished retired exhausted, amid cheers of derision, to rest among the groups of staid, elderly spectators crouched upon the green, umpires and judges of the performance, and he followed ere long by the scoffers, themselves laid prostrate. Then the night shades fell; the moon ascended, like a silver shield suspended on the blue arras of a chieftain's hall; the stars shone out like argent crescents lighting the Arcadian revels of the silvan glade; the ring of melody died away, the voice of mirth was hushed, the sounds of laughter were heard no more, shadowy forms dispersed and vanished in bower and woodland. The piper wended homewards with his music and a full stomach, a ragged coat, and a light heart. Johnny Doyle, truant still, despite the priest's late warning of a crimp-sergeant, with tail and horns, lying in wait for him, would escort safe home a piece of the way the damsel of his predilection, which piece was so circuitous and prolonged that it was late when they came in sight of the lone sheiling where she dwelt. Here they spied a light shining through a chink of the little broken casement stuffed with rags.

"I doubt poor Grandmother Nancy's dead," said the young girl, gazing anxiously at the hut.

"An' sure it's time for her, the crathur; ain't she a'most a hundred?" philosophically argued Johnny.

They hastened their steps, and as they neared the threshold, the voice of a man from within, pitched high in anger, smote their ear. They paused to listen.

"What's your business to meddle here, sirrah? Get out, I say, or you shall be flogged and pitchcapped. I believe you're a priest?—upon my honour, you've just the cut!—and if so, look to yourself sharp."

"Uist!" cried Johnny; "I'll creep in an' see what's up." He gave a glance at his *shillelah*—a great bludgeon of an oak stick, in which he prided as much as ever did young knight of his shining sword—cautiously lifted the latch, and, followed by Nano, he stole into a corner behind a creel of turf, where, unseen himself in the dimly obscure chamber, lighted by a farthing rush-dip, he could observe what was doing. Stretched upon a wisp of straw

on the ground, covered with a dirty and tattered patch-quilt, lay an aged woman on the verge of dissolution, at her feet crouched a female of middle age, her daughter, with a child in her arms, and two more sprawling on the floor, in a state of semi-nudity. In the middle of the hovel stood, confronting, face to face, two forms, the incarnation of good and evil, met in conflict, each on his mission. In one they recognised the portly person of Father Murphy, the second wore the livery of the Church of England. Intervening between the collision and clash of menacing opponents ascended, in pleading tones, the voice of the kneeling woman, as addressing the parson she exclaimed, with entreaty :

"For the love o' God, parson jewel, go out, an' don't disturb the death-bed o' this crathur. Our faith is all that's left us, *avourneen*; an' don't sthrive to purvint us goin' to God the way we know, an' that thim before us is gone;—leave us to our priest."

"You besotted heathen!" roared the parson, "can nothing knock the light of truth into your thick skulls, or tear you from the fangs of those limbs of Belial—the priests—who enslave you soul and body?"

"Och, sir, dear," she replied, in tremulous accent, "that wasn't the way the saints an' 'postles made convarts. Don't ye see that in the very way ye spake ye haven't the token of the diploma on ye."

"You cursed idolater, what do you know about diploma; what way would you be led? Haven't we tried soft words, and seductions, food, clothing, and money, without avail? The churches are empty, and in every town your dirty, idle, thieving brats infect the light of day."

"God help us! we like good eatin' an' dacency as well as our betthers; but as we can't have it both ways, ain't it betther for us be losers here nor hereafter?"

"My good woman, in my zeal for your salvation, I will show you the way to be well-off here, and hereafter, if you will listen to me, in spite of the cunning, wicked priests, whose ignorant dupes you are. I am the Rev. Surdanaplus Pomfret, the curate of your new rector, Parson Lamb, by whose instructions I am acting. You have a

lot of naked children : if you send them to our church and school they shall be so fed, and clothed, and taught, you won't know them in a month."

"Arrah, isn't there a temptation for a mother?" exclaimed Mrs. O'Toole, her sorrow-stricken, hunger-pinched features, expanding with a burst of comic humour, as she looked at her daughter Nano, who had silently glided in. "Not to know my own childhre in a month! Bad luck to the tongue that said it! I hope to know my own flesh an' blood to the Monday afther the Sunday of eternity, in spite o' swaddler or parson; an' it's a shame for ye, ye wolf in sheep's clothin'," she continued, waxing bold in the presence of her eldest daughter, "to be intrudin' where ye're not wanted. If we had a notion to be a turncoat, like Judas, we didn't wait for ye to doome wid the bribe;—we wor offered the thirty pieces o' silver many's the day ago, an' put the sign o' the crass betune us an' it, the Lord an' his Blessed Mother be praised for evermore!—an' though the hearth was cowlid an' black the same day there was sunshine in our bosoms, an' we fairly danced to the music of our own hearts on the neck o' throuble; an' if my man Terry was home now it's out like a spinnin'-top he'd peg ye; an' I've sint my girleen to look afther him, an' fetch him home; an' if ye're wise ye'll just take yerself off, afore he coomes an' ketches ye tormentin' his mother-in-law, an' she on her death-bed, the crathur."

"Pray, sir, do have the kindness to withdraw, and not molest these poor people, who do not belong to your flock," said Father Murphy, now joining his voice of entreaty: "Your interference can only be productive of evil."

"Are you a priest, fellow?" vociferated the Rev. Sandapalus, literally foaming with fury to meet disappointment and failure where he had presumptuously counted on success.

"Sir, as well ask me am I a doctor or a lawyer. Am I obliged to answer the impertinent interrogations of a querist who rejects even the courtesy of supposing me to be a gentleman?" returned Father Murphy, with urbane dignity and perfect composure.

"What's the priest saying, Maggie?" suddenly croaked

the dying woman, in piping, querulous accents, as an eccentric flash of mind lightened through the clouded stupor of age, and revived memory of tones once familiar to her ear. "God bless him!—fetch him to lay his hand on my head, for I haven't long to be wid yez now, *aroon*. Whin I slept, my Vaura, that I berrid sixty years ago, coome to me, the dawny crathur, clothed in the same light that shines round the sun, an' put her lips to mine, an' breathed like a summer wind sweet with the smell o' violets into my soul: 'Mother, *avourneen*, we're coomin' for ye, to bring ye home wid us at last.' 'Vaura, my child,' siz I, spakin' to her in my dhrame, 'how did ye coome? sure it's cowl'd an' dead ye were whin I seen ye laid in ould dawny comfit churchyard at Celbridge,' an' she laughed. 'It isn't death, mother,' siz she, 'but a gate,' an' sure enough as she said it I seen a great gate openin' into a fine counthry;—och, the beauty o' it a'most tuk away my breath an' blinded me. Howaniver my child run through it singin'—singin'—singin'—an' white wooly clouds came an' floated round her, an' she shone through thim like a star, an'—O Blessed Mother! Son o' the Vargin!—wait, wait a minute!—where's the priest?—Make haste, *acushla*!—Fetch the priest an' let me go!"

"Pray, sir," said Father Murphy, now advancing, stole in hand, with authoritative gesture and voice of command, "withdraw. I am a priest, charged to administer the last rites of the Church to this departing soul."

"I won't, priest," responded the Rev. Sardanapalus, with malicious smile of defiance; "I will stand here till the breath is out of the old heathen's body; she may be damned before she shall have your illegal ministry. If I can do no more just now than frustrate your conceit and the crone's pleasure, I'll do that."

Up started Mrs. O'Toole from her squatting posture, clenching her fist, and every eloquent feature expressive of incensed emotion. "Put him out!" she yelled, with frantic gesture, looking wildly round for some article ready at hand to hurl at the parson's head; "put him out, I say! it's the cloven hoof is in it!"—She squared at the parson.—"Am I goin' to let my ould mother die widout benefit o'

clergy for ye, ye rat-faced villain; coome, skip away afore I lave the prent o' my five nails on yer tallow cheeks, *inagh!*"

"Come, my man, step out," said Father Murphy; "don't oblige me to try a wrestle with you;" and he reared himself in a menacing attitude.

"No, no!" retorted the parson, drawing a pistol from his bosom; "don't think to daunt me, priest! I never soil my fingers by contact with papist or rebel. By your leave, priest, I'd choose transfer you to the hangman; but, if you compel me to use this——"

The parson's uplifted arm, while he spoke, dropped powerless by his side, and the pistol, flying to the wall, went off with a loud report, lodging the bullet in the thatch of the roof. Children and women shrieked in concert, and Father Murphy, beholding the author of this uproar standing now in the circle with blazing eye and lurid cheek, exclaimed in amazement: "Johnny!" But Johnny, without reply, seizing the parson by the collar, dragged him, kicking, cursing, struggling, from the little chamber to the threshold, where spinning him with a powerful evolution from his gaunt grasp, he ejected him *testotum* fashion from the premises, adding insult to injury by calling after the discomfited apostle, on his homeward bound course: "Halloo, bishop, shake the dust from off yer feet; an' if ye don't want to be baten blue-mouldy an' made smithereens of, keep yerself among thim that vallys the blissin' o' ye, an' don't coome agin sniffin' an' prowlin' like a thievin' fox to rob poor men's roosts;—augh, what a way yer in to be canonised, my haro."

CHAPTER XIX.

THE TITHE FORAY—O'DWYER THE INSURGENT.

" Her children die ; the nation lives,
 Through signs celestial ranging ;
 The nation's destiny still survives,
 Unchanged, yet ever changing ;
 The many centuried wrath goes by ;
 But while earth's tumult rages,
 In *Calp quies* burst and die,
 Thou storm of temporal ages."

AUBREY DE VÈRE.

INDEPENDENTLY of the thousand-and-one expedients concocted by an infamous Government, and executed with merciless rigour, to goad a peaceful country to rebellion, for the nefarious purpose of effecting that universally unpopular measure—the Union—there had existed long in the country a separate element of strife, whose potent agency was now also enlisted in the cause of oppression and persecution, to promote anarchy, and contribute its quota of misery to the ferocious cruelties from which, quoting Lord Gosford's address to the magistracy of Armagh, "Neither age, sex, nor acknowledged innocence" were exempt, with all power, civil and military, vested in the hands of the lawless Protestant ascendancy, an aristocratic orange banditti, composed of the oligarchs of Church and State, who constituted themselves at once judge, jury, and rulers of the people, upon whom they perpetrated with impunity horrors and atrocities, whose details, but for the corroborative testimony of Lord Moira in parliament, and many others of equally high credit, would be scouted as horrible fiction, and the verdict of "extravagant" be applied to the narration of scenes and delineation of characters set forth in these pages, illustrative of the wrongs and commemorative of the names of mute sufferers, of whom history has left little record or none—martyrs for creed and country, victims among thousands such whose memory

has perished with their extinct generation in the land, or happily perchance yet survives in the traditionary lore of some kindred bosom, amid the broad savannahs, and primeval forests, the rude shanties or gorgeous palaces of the western hemisphere, where no bigot intolerance of legislator or potentate dare issue a ukase to blot out liberty of conscience, or the name of Papist, from the archives of the dominion. Prominent at this period of '98, among the disastrous incentives, maddening a distressed and tortured people on their native soil, were the tithe forays all over the country, by the Thugs of the Anglo Church, wringing with unconscionable exaction and remorseless violence bread from the lips of starving peasantry that affluence night banquet, and Anglican saints clothed in lawn might revel in luxurious state, and in countless instances reddening with bloodshed, the tribute wrested to furnish the tables of the pampered, and minister to the orgies and riot of bacchanalians, when wild resistance to plunder was met, by armed myrmidons empowered, by law to enforce the claims of the parson to the Papists' bread. Yet were these scenes of deplorable tragedy betimes also interluded with ludicrous comedy, when the warfare of the Church Protestant occasionally stooped to the exigence of employing a regiment of Hussars* to do battle for a petty flock of twelve geese, and escort the screaming prisoners, with the cackling gander at their head, in the county of Kilkenny, and again when a solitary donkey or stoical pig was conducted in state by a guard of honour no less respectable, to their destined goal.

In the little community that dwelt in rags and squalor among pigsties, duck-ponds, and dung-hills, in the village of Tubber, much harmony prevailed, and peace was seldom disturbed, save at those stated periods when the absentee landlord's agent pressed for rent, and the proctor came down to levy tithes; nevertheless, neighbour helping neighbour, these troubles were mitigated and got over; and as the people quietly submitted to labour and to starve for the benefit of the Thug, all went on as of yore, till one

* A fact.

evil day brought from Lucan to the village a stranger who, claiming descent from the great De Lacy, one of the early Anglo-Norman invaders in the time of the second Henry, could ill brook the tyranny much less the insolent contumely with which Lord Carhampton, of later importation, had abused himself, and insulted his fallen fortune; the fact that he had been the Rev. Mr. Berwick's gardener did not shield his family from outrage at the hands of the notorious Luttrell, or his own back from the condign punishment due to his sturdy insubmissiveness to his lordship's pleasure and his ungrateful menaces of revenge: so dishonoured, scourged, picketed, a homeless outcast flying from the gibbet, he took refuge in Tubber, a ruined man, yet with a sudden revival of the old chivalric spirit in his Norman bosom. Not long he pined inactive in the genial soil where the warmth of sympathy soon raked together and heated into kindling fire the smouldering embers of a blighted heart. First and foremost in the league, offensive and defensive, which De Lacy rallied around him, in deadly purpose to wreak vengeance—justice he called it—upon the author of his wrongs, and all his affinities of evil breed, yclept Saxon, was Donough O'Brien, the village Solon, one of the numerous posterity of the royal Brian Boroimhe, whose spirit of antipathy against all taxes not boroimhe, he inherited in a remarkable degree. Nevertheless, *sic transit gloria mundi*, the vicissitudes of six centuries had borne fruit: the descendant of the crowned monarch of Kincora followed the plough instead of the royal standard to the field, arrayed his princely limbs in corduroy, neither fresh nor whole, in lieu of the *ilbrachta* of orange, purple, and crimson, pulled a battered *caubeen* over a bronzed brow, that a *cath bharr* and plume would have nobly graced, held between his lips a short, grimy *dudeen*, instead of a martial trumpet, and thus accoutred, he appeared before the equally dilapidated Norman, whose shrewd eye soon discovered in the Celtic representative qualities which his great-grandancestor had unwisely or unfortunately not appreciated in his progenitors, and but for which, in lieu of implacable enemies, they might have become staunch allies, viz., strong genius,

courage, fidelity, humour, partiality to justice, hatred of oppression and oppressors, sympathy with misfortune, admiration of valour—the more reckless the better—hospitality, improvidence, imprudence, frolic-loving mirth, and thriftless prodigality. Accordingly, it was not long till these congenial partners, entering upon business, soon formed a company, of whose principles we can only as yet say that they were not of loyal tendency to the paternal Government of Great Britain or King George, and to the last degree hostile, irreverent, and intractable to the Church of England, the parson, and the proctor, chief among whom was Johnny Doyle, the carpenter's eldest son.

It was yet early, on the morning of the 20th May, when a little boy of eight years old, clad in tattered corduroy trousers (other covering he had none), issued, with a potato in his hand, from one of the cabins on the roadside of the village. At first, intent on his morning meal, he stood, with naked feet plashing in the duck-pool of green slime at the door of the hovel; having swallowed the mealy esculent, and pitched the skins to a clutch of chickens picking about, he raised his eyes, and after pausing a moment, with gaping mouth, he cried aloud: "Och, moder, moder!—roon!—here's the sodgers, an' dey coomin' dis way down!" At the call, not only from the hut of Morgan Cavanagh, a day labourer on an estate once possessed by his ancestry, but from every neighbouring cot, deserting the early repast, out poured the inmates, men, women, and children, while, as though an electric wire had communicated the signal, from the dwellings scattered far apart in the green lanes, among the fields, on the hill-side, issued the alarmed inmates, and every eye intent was riveted upon the approaching file of soldiery, pacing along with stately tramp, arrayed in all the panoply of war.

"Och, murther!—we'll be slaughtered! It's coomin' for the tithes they are, the vagabones!" cried a young woman, with a child in her arms, running out.

"Sorra lie in it, bad luck 'to 'em!" exclaimed a shrivelled crone, with dishevelled looks escaping through the rents of a cap on her head. "Roon, Paddy, avic, an' put the

pig into the sty, or they'll dhrove him wid the rest; an' sure its lucky now I have the resate in my bosom."

"*Hoorish, hoorish, amuck!*" shouted Paddy, dashing over a dunghill and through a duck-pond, with an agility that betokened his anxiety to secure his swine property from the pious grasp of the parson.

"Arrah, Biddy, whose is the cattle they're dhriyin' now; I see 'em?" said a woman, who was smoking a short pipe beside a lot of men, congregated in silence, some leaning on their spades, and more in various posture, but all with countenance indicative of intense interest, watching the proceedings of the military.

"Sorrah one o' me knows, Peggy, dear;" replied a scantily-dressed barefooted matron, with unkempt hair, blown about by the wind, as she ran gathering in her hens and ducks from all quarters to refuge; while a ruddy nymph at her elbow, whose sole wardrobe was a petticoat of patches, and a boy's jacket, *minus* one sleeve, having scanned the approaching booty, with eyes peering wistfully beneath her shading hand, said:

"Musha, thin, if it ain't Mooney's heifer an' the little dun cow—*dts! dts!* God help the crathur, wid the houseful o' childhre, an' the brother just coome from Dublin, an' the wife down in the fever."

"Begorra, my heavy curse on yez for tithes and parsons! I doubt, Molly, *aroon*, will Terry O'Toole be able to show a testher to stop their jaw this time;—an' he's in arrear, morebetoken, for the last quarther," said a comely-looking young woman, whose costume, original to the last degree, was a piece of carpet stitched together for a petticoat and a fragment of a canvas sack for scarf mantling her shoulders, while masses of beautiful soft shining black hair floated like a veil round her shapely head;—"ay, in troth, Sally, *asthore*; and every pinny just spint on the wake of poor ould Nancy. I dhread, it'll go hard wid Terry;—an' if they take his goat an' bits o' sticks, I dunna what the poor man'll do;—an' there's plinty more no better off, God help 'em!—we'll have ructions!"

While this colloquy was being carried on among the

neighbours, some of whom had paid their tithes, and had immunity from present distress, and others who had not paid, but had nothing to lose; others were running to and fro, in dire confusion, to secure the pigs, poultry, goats, donkeys, and humble property, upon which their subsistence mainly depended, from the rapacity of the Reverend Nathaniel Lamb's and Sardanapalus Pomfret's satellites, in the event of a raid made upon defaulters; while some, with boding hearts, went to fetch the small savings that, wrung from penury, left them without food, surmising that the total amount would yet fail to propitiate grace till the next quarter. Meanwhile, "Forward!" was the officer's cry; and the Hussars, at full gallop, came dashing in among the people, who recoiled in fright from the prancing horses, scarcely less high-mettled than their cruel riders, whose menacing brows and contemptuous eyes the poor peasantry met with awe, as many a mother pressed her child closer to her bosom, and courtesied with timid, pleading gesture; and many an aged man doffed his hat, in servile token of the homage which his swelling heart belied, to the pampered ruffianism of Britain; dismayed children clung to their parents, and, through tangled tresses of gold and jet, their dirty faces peered at the fearful redcoats. Captain Gowan, and Major Saunders, of Saunder's Grove, riding to the front, when a halt was ordered, addressed the male portion of the assembly, foremost of which stood side by side two men of scowling and determined aspect, with pikes in each brawny hand, who had just arrived in hot haste as the military came up.

"So ho, my lads!—pikes, eh?" exclaimed Major Saunders, scornfully eyeing the cowering forms in the background, and the more prominent, shock-headed Hercules in front, whose blue eyes, cold, hard, and glittering like steel, met his with unquailing glance. "I say, no go! Down with the skivers, and out with the cash; we're come to gather the parson's tithes."

"To gather athray moonbeams, *ahagur*, ye are. Let's see how ye'll set about it!" grinned the swarthy Cyclops, whose tall, lithe, muscular frame towered like a slender

poplar-tree beside a robust oak, as he turned to smile at his brother champion.

"You blackguard!—do you defy us?" thundered Captain Gowan, advancing his horse a few paces, and half-drawing his sword. "What's your name, you rascal?"

"O'Brien's my name, an' I ain't ashamed o' it, which is more nor everyone can say, *avic*," sturdily made answer the peasant of regal lineage, with comic grimace.

"Enough!" roared Major Saunders. "Don't I know the villain!—one of the worst characters in the place: a rebel, and ringleader of the United Irishmen. Fall on, men! Break open every door, search for arms, and distrain goods and chattels. without fear or affection, in the name of our lord the king!"

"God help us!" ejaculated a hoary man, casting upwards his weak eyes, dim with age and tears; "the foxes' holes an' the ravens' nests is more sacred thin the homes o' the poor. Disthrain on me what ye can, major; ye won't find what ye'll be the richer of;—the very rats, the crathurs, don't choose bare cupboards for their lodgin'."

"I've the resate, major, jewel!" screamed one poor woman, holding up a bit of dirty paper to his very nose, as she beheld the soldiery dismount in haste to execute their orders;—"and I!"—"and I!"—"and I!" shouted several others, rushing forward distractedly to stand between their frail doors and the devastator.

"Let the first that crasses the threshold o' Neil More say a *Pater* an' *Ave*, if he knows how; an' if he don't, why they won't charge him nothin' for a warm sate by the fire down below there," said a dark-eyed, dark-browed young man of mien that would be grand and imposing if it partook less of the character of rowdyism and the desperado, as with a tinker's box of implements badge of his profession, strapped across his stalwart shoulders, he stood, with folded arms, in front of his homestead, where his young wife had that morning given birth to her first child, and savagely manifested every indication of guarding his brood with his life.

"Soldiers! do your duty, and shoot like a dog the first

man, woman, or child that resists the law!" vociferated Captain Gowan, levelling his piece menacingly at the crowd.

"Read the Riot Act first, my bully; it's Tom de Lacy warns ye!" cried that individual, casting a look of significance at his pike, and another at O'Brien, who shouldered his weapon.

"Curse yer impudence, ye Irish cur, ye confounded rebel!" roared Major Saunders, making a cut with his drawn sabre at an idiot boy in the throng, who, frightfully gashed, set up a hideous howl, and ran frantically, streaming with blood, to take refuge in the arms of an old woman, his grandmother.

"Riot Act for you, or the like of you, forsooth! What next will you want? An address from a member of Parliament, maybe, soliciting the favour of your loyalty? Wreck away men!—pitch out the old lumber, smash the crockery, fire the rubbish, and knock every fellow on the head that resists, and be damned to you!"

"Begorra, my hero, it's yerself is a soldier to the backbone, an' ought to get an address o' thanks from the Government for slaughterin' unarmed men, women, an' childhre!" shouted in reply the stentorian voice of Johnny Doyle, as with a reinforcement of some forty or fifty people, gathering from all the remoter hamlets and sheilings, he hurried down, full of curiosity, to the scene of uproar, ostensibly to look on, but not unprepared to help the weak in the very probable event of a soul-inspiring skirmish with the redcoats. Turning disdainfully from the peasant youth, to gloat over the picture of piles of dismembered stools, chairs, and tables, smashed "chany," wailing children, shuddering women, and unnerved men, Major Saunders called to one female, more well-to-do in appearance than the rest, having a comfortable shawl covering the white cap on her head, and a warm frieze cloak tucked round her arms and shoulders:

"I say, missus, get some refreshment for my men; they won't, I daresay, be particular. A smart ride and keen morning air whets the appetite. Some cans of milk

and bread and eggs will suffice, with your usual Irish hospitality."

"Troth, yer honor," returned Rose O'Brien—for it was she who had come down to watch over the safety of her omadhaun of a husband, and see that he got into no danger, in case of a scrimmage, in which she did not share—"it's long sence the likes o' yez left it in our manes to be hospitable. Many's the time our childhre cry to us for victuals, an' we must stop their mouths wid '*Uist, alanna*, the praties is growin'.' Pursuin' to the day the Sassenach an' the parsons coome among us ;—bedad, while they hung the Bible for a warrant on their soords, they didn't hide the cloven howf, anyway, undher the sheepskin. My heavy curse on yez ! Whin the sky weeps rain it grows flowers, an' laves sweetness behind on the earth, but the tears ye bid rain blisters the land, an' ——"

"You vile-tongued beldame, choke you !" yelled Captain Gowan, plunging forward to strike the insolent woman, who effected an opportune retreat into the swiftly-opening circle of men, and was effectually shielded by the advanced pikes, while with loud imprecations, amid groans, yells, shrieks, cries, shouts of derision, and ravings of despair, the work of outrage progressed, and the livestock, pigs, goats, cows, donkeys, ponies, geese, ducks, hens, turkeys, added with yelping dogs their multitudinous notes to swell the babel of din and infinite confusion.

"Peace, you rabble of idiots, you herd of swine !" vociferated Major Saunders, stunned by the uproar and discordant chorus of—"Ye shan't dhrive my pig ; there's the parson's resate ; bad luck to him and you !" "Let go my cow, ye robber ; didn't I show ye my paper ?" "Where are ye goin' wid the ass an' the goat, ye ngly spalpeen ?" "Gie me back my hens an' ducks, Misther Whipper Snapper." "Och, musha, musha, the 'only kish o' prates in the house, an' what's to feed the poor childhre ?" "Arrah, plaize don't smash up the churn for sport !" "Och, *wirra, wirra*, is it dhrag the wisp o' sthraw from undher the sick childhre ?" "Come on, my *gossoons* ; let me see ye put a fut on the

thrashold o' my flure, or hurt a hair o' the head o' my wife or baby;—yer wilkim t' all ye can get wid a tussel on the outside o' me." "Och, mammy, mammy, they've tuck the spinnin' wheel an' the hanks o' yarn." "Bad cess to ye! lay down that creel o' turf an' bag o' male; ye've got more nor yer rights in the flitch o' bacon." "O Lord, save us! now we'll have murder!" "They've dhragged the poor woman an' the babby from their bed in spite o' the husband, an' thrown thim on the dunghill, widout scarce a screed on 'em for dacency; an' begorra Neil has split the skull o' two o' 'em; an' och, och, wirra, roon—roon, take the childhre, Molly!—Murdher!"

"Fire!" shouted Major Saunders, as Neil More, grappling with the assailants of his humble domicile, hurled one with a broken limb to the earth, and with a fearful stroke of his hammer knocked two others senseless at his feet, a roar of musketry that smothered every other sound shook the welking, a lull of petrified silence ensued. "Fire!" again called out the major. A second volley arose, with shrieks and groans. When the shroud of smoke dispersed away, and the order to march was given, driving before them unmolested the cattle, and leaving piles of wrecked chattels in flames and some hovels on fire, the military departed in martial array, playing the tune, "Croppies Lie Down." The terror-stricken people, offering no further obstruction, stood for some moments apathetically still; not a word was spoken, while in every posture of agony the dead and the dying lay around. At length a cry arose that broke the trance of stupor. It was from a child who found its mother, Rose O'Brien, among the slain. At once burst forth, in awful chorus, the wild wail of sorrow for slain friends and kindred, the mournful *ulla, ulla* of the Celtic *caoine*, while forgetful of every other calamity and loss, men and women rushed to and fro to succour the wounded and bear away the dead, among the latter of which, comprising some seven or eight, was the wife of Neil More the tinker, who, with the infant in his arms, knelt in sullen torpor beside the corpse, while a middle-aged man close by filled the air with lamentations over the body of his only son, a fine stripling of seventeen,

and defied every consolation of sympathy, till a bold, resolute-looking man, apparently a stranger, and one who seemed invested with the air of authority and high command, came by, who, waiving all attempt at soothing speech, addressed the bereaved father in tone peremptory and sharp:—

“Hear me, you howling idiot! By St. Bridget, the Sassenach justly smite as paltry curs men who bend their shoulders to the lash! Shame, shame, upon thy manhood, to crouch moaning over this murdered youth, where boldly thou shouldst rise to avenge him.”

Mooney, the blacksmith, with cheeks wet with tears, suspended his sobs to survey with irate glance the rude scoffer of a father's woe; but in the mien and eye of the stranger there was something that awed him to silence. He gazed at O'Brien, hanging in the moody gloom of despair, not far from the spot, over the lifeless mother of his weeping children, and upon De Lacy, the *sthaca* or idle vagrant, drawing near and surveying intently the person of the unknown, who now turned to O'Brien, saying with sarcastic irony—

“Thou, too, strong man, it well becomes thee to brood faint-hearted over the slaughtered mate thy arm should have shielded from death. Get out for craven hearts whom my eyesight loathes.”

Up sprung Donough O'Brien, the spirit of the victor of Clontarf ascendant in the ploughman's bosom.

“I dunno whotsomiver ye call yerself, misther, but it ain't the thing for ye to coome here swaggerin' and jibin' poor min in their misfortune an' distress. If it's broodin' ye think I am, so does the thunder-cloud afore it flashes out the lightnin' that hits its mark. An' if ye think it's a craven heart I am, that wouldn't have sthruke a blow for the kith an kin, as was near an' dear to me, jist step out, *avie*, an' I'll lay the handwritin' o' my fist on ye that'll be a warrant to satisfy ye for many a day, *inagh*.”

“Shake hands, friend; you are the man I want,” said the stranger, with triumphant smile.

“An' what the plague call have ye to me,” exclaimed

the exasperated Donough, wiping the perspiration from his heated brow, "an' where are ye from, at all?"

"Where I'm from don't signify just now," loftily returned the stranger; "but here I am to tell you, that had your forefathers and mine been true to their country and themselves, we their children had not seen the day rude and fierce invaders should have left the taint of their foot upon our holy soil, and tithe and riot in Irish blood; but the time is at hand when we yet may hurl the accursed bondage, as a load of thorns, from our shoulders, if we but stand as men, and not crouch like slaves to the yoke. My name, anon, will be familiar to your ear, though now I glory save in being the leader of a band of ill-used men like you, who, denied the commonest rights of humanity, live by violating laws that exclude them from the protection the beasts of the field might claim of justice and mercy. They follow my steps that lead to freedom, they obey my behest that promises redress of wrong. I ask you, in this hour of tribulation, over the bodies of your ruthlessly butchered friends, will you lie down grovelling in the dust in which you have been trampled, slaking it with unmanly tear, or with bold endeavour rise like eagles on soaring pinions, renewed in strength, and enrol yourselves in the champion band of O'Dwyer of Wicklow?"

While thus the chieftain spoke, with fluent eloquence flashing eye, and graceful action, the tumult of grief wildly surging in every throbbing bosom, lulled like the roar of the tempest, as each one paused in deep, earnest attention, drinking in with thirsty ear words that fell like drops of balm into gaping heart wounds. Nearer and closer, with burning eyes, bated breath, and suspended emotion, they pressed around the orator, whose discriminating glance appeared to single out for special notice the persons of O'Brien, De Lacy, and Neil More. A murmur, at first indistinct and low, arose, swelling ever louder and more loud; then, shaping his thoughts in audible speech, Mooney the blacksmith exclaimed:—

"The vagabonds have dhruve us to it! Let us follow the captain, an' show 'em the worm that's trod on can turn. Ooh, my brave gosssoon, my only one, my Brian ogue, did I

live to see this day that yer ould father 'ud be rainin' salt tears over yer bier, cut down like a flower just openin' in the bud by the bloody hand of the Sassenach? Ooh, no, no, no!"

"Arrah, whisht, Thady Mooney, an' bear it like a man," cried several sympathising voices around. "Ain't there Neil More an' Donough O'Brien bearin' their cross like Christians, widout a murmur?"

"Begorra, an' if we are," growled Neil More, surly and scornfully, "it's bekase we mane to call every mother's sowl of 'em, an' all belongin' to 'em, that put it on us to a bitter reckoning;" and the speaker paused, not abashed or disconcerted, in respect to Father Murphy, who, hearing of the tragedy, had hurried down, with a couple more priests, to see what could be done to help the sufferers.

While the latter hastened to attend two men, one dying, the other badly wounded, Father Frank, with uplifted hand, strove to quell into silence the tumultuous storm of lamentation and loud angry complaints and curses upon the parsons and the Sassenach in general, that broke forth with renewed violence, as, like passionate children flocking round a father, craving redress of wrong and sympathy, they heaved in thronging masses, each with his tale of sorrow round the pastor, whose voice, gentle but firm, arose:

"Peace, peace, my children, my dear ones."

"Ooh, musha, yer riverence, it's aisy wid ye prachin' patience, an' look at my dead child," wailed a matron, rocking and swaying her attenuated form over the body of a little girl of about ten years, lying in a pool of blood at her feet.

"Arrah, musha, what's the good o' livin' honest, Christianable lives, and industriously earnin' our bit, whin we're robbed and murdered like this at the ind o' it," savagely vociferated the tinker, with a defiant look at the priest. "There's my poor little Noreen a cowl'd corpse afore my eyes; an' what's the good o' prachin' to a fella that has got nothin' to live for, an' wants nothin' but vingeance on thim as done it?" He violently kicked his box of tools aside, and striding forward addressed O'Dwyer:

"I'll follow ye to wheresomiver ye bid."

"So will I," exclaimed de Lacy, shouldering his pike and stepping forward. "I left all belongin' to me undher the green sod o' Lucan, an' it ain't no more use prachin' relidgion that doesn't save people from the persecution o' the devil. Here goes, my hearty; our best way now is to turn devils ourselves an' give it 'em hot."

"I've all my life till now been a hard labourin' dacent man, sthrivin' to bring up an honest family; an' now, since the Lord laves us, I'm thinkin' we may as well shift for ourselves the best way we can: not but that we'll always stick to the ould faith an' skiver the parsons," said Pat Fitzsimon, the letter-carrier's brother, gazing moodily at his wrecked hut and homeless family cowering around the smoking embers.

In deep distress Father Frank Murphy heard the wild, unhallowed ravings of fevered brains and agonised hearts, at a loss to know what to say or do till, the access of delirium subsided, the frenzied people would again be amenable to reason and the voice of their pastor. With involuntary tears in his earnest blue eyes, he turned to O'Brien:

"Will you too, dear friend, turn away with the others from following our dear Lord to the Hill of Calvary, to suffer, and, if need be, to die with Him, and so forfeit the crown of glory they are casting away in their madness and impatience of short-lived suffering here?"

"Och, heaven forbid, your riverence," sobbed the ploughman, as he grasped and shook the hand of the priest, while their mingled tears fell upon the ploughman's dead wife. "Welcome be the will o' God! an' shure where she's gone, why wouldn't I sthrive to follow. The light o' heaven to ye, Rose, *aroon!*—ye wor the pulse o' my heart, an' the light o' my eyes, an' yer voice was music to my ear, an' now, *acushla*, I'll never hear it more in this world. God forgive thim that laid ye low this day! *Huist*, childhre—*alannas*, whist, an' don't break my heart all out wid yer grief. Ye poor motherless orphints, may the Queen o' Heaven look on yez, I pray."

"She will, she will," cried Father Murphy, hastening after the refractory members of his flock; and coming up

with Neil More and De Lacy, he collared them just as they were swinging in full trot after the retreating form of O'Dwyer, who also halted at a little distance, reverentially doffing his cap to the priest, whom at the same time he regarded with looks of jealous vigilance and mistrust. "My aggrieved, yet misguided children," exclaimed Father Frank, with mien and tone of benign authority and tender entreaty, accosting each stern-browed man, "whither are you fleeing? Stay, stay, I invoke, I conjure you, in the name of the great Being whom you have offended by your impatient murmurs and unjust reproaches. What, my friends, is this earth?—our all, our end, that we shall not purchase, at the cost of some suffering here, the reversion of an eternal reward. I say, Tom de Lacy and Neil More, you are both greater fools than I take you for. If you will hold the counterfeit coin in which Lucifer indemnifies them that serve him in this world—mind, only for this world—and to end with it, is it better worth the seeking than the everlasting guerdon with which the Almighty means to recompense those gallant souls that have borne affliction and the weight of the cross for his sake here?"

"Och, bother!" muttered the blacksmith, striving gently to twist himself from the grip of the priest, as he became sensible of a flutter in his bosom, and frowning more heavily to disguise his relenting mood; "ain't I a ruined man?"

"But not yet a ruined soul. Come, man, kick the devil before you, and give the triumph to God and his saints, by showing forth, now or never, your Christianity. Come, Tom de Lacy, heaven's a good place; do you expect to get an estate in it for nothing, or do you think going to the devil here for comfort will help you into it? I tell you there isn't a soul in glory, from Christ, the King of Heaven, who died on the cross, to the innocent babe that dies on its mother's knee, that didn't first suffer on earth, some more, someless; and do you hope to walk in like an archangel that never sinned? Tut, tut, man; be reasonable!"

"And does yer riverence suppose that it's in our human nature to be like sticks an' stones, an' not to feel throuble?"

angrily retorted De Lacy, feeling his ground giving way, and clutching at some prop to support him.

"My dear son, what would be the good of trouble if we didn't feel it? If gold did not yield to fire how would it be purified?" said Father Murphy, with suavity.

This logic floored De Lacy. He stared at Neil More, who grumbled *sotto voce* :

"Begorra, there's no rasonin' agin yer riverence."

Father Frank, with beaming eye, saw the obdurate impenitents were being mollified, and after a stubborn conflict yielding to grace: "Come now, he added, persuasively, "make an act of contrition for your inconsiderate offence to your good Creator, with a resolution not to offend Him by sin; and now tell me where you are going that you may have my blessing on the way."

"They are coming with me, Father Murphy," said O'Dwyer, here coming up and joining the group. "We're off to Wicklow."

The priest, who did not then know the insurgent chief, merely returned: "God speed you, sir! Pray for me, my friends; mind my warning, and beware of falling into mischief." Then returning, the good priest addressed himself to comfort, advise, and help the rest of his stricken flock.

CHAPTER XX.

A MIDNIGHT TRAGEDY.

"The bluebells rush up where the young May hath trod,
The souls of our martyrs are reigning with God.
Sad mother, forgive us! Yon skylark no choice
Permits us—from heaven he is crying, 'Rejoice.'"

AUBREY DE VERE.

It is not to be supposed that an event of so much importance as the military raid upon the Doyles could have transpired unknown to the neighbours, or that, inactive, they would have beheld the ravaging flames consume the dwelling of a family so universally esteemed; but the appalling tidings had spread far and wide with telegraphic celerity of the terrible enemy's approach, and in every direction the alarmed people had taken hasty flight, with their little ones, and what necessaries they could carry, to the shelter of the remoter hills and the solitude of the desert wilderness. Hence, with the exception of a few bed-ridden, aged, or incapacitated by infirmity or sickness, none were left that could venture to the succour of the distressed. In one of these last-mentioned sheilings, inhabited by the widowed Esther Mooney and her little family, within an easy distance of the forge and her brother-in-law's cabin, the bereaved wife, hourly expecting her confinement, had besought Kitty Burke to stay till her mother, who was coming to see her, had arrived by that night's coach from Dublin. While Johnny Doyle, the truant, on his homeward route from the cottage of his betrothed, Nano O'Toole, timely warned by Shaun Beg O'Leary, the piper, that the yeomen, militia, and military were all out and beginning their ravages, irrespective of sex, innocence, youth, or age, concluding that his father, with O'Regan and Terry O'Toole, would take every necessary precaution for the safety of his family, turned from his path, and finding that Shaun Beg, with his wife and grandchildren, was making

for the hills, he charged them with a commission to fetch Nano along, while he would overtake them on the way, with Mooney, O'Brien, and O'Loughlin, who, being all marked men, he made sure of accompanying him so soon as he conveyed to them rumour of their danger.

Sometime between the hours of eleven and twelve p.m., Miles O'Byrne, accompanied by his cousin, young Miles Byrne, Gerald Byrne, and William Byrne of Ballymanus, were riding home from dining with some friends at Annamoe. Conversing as they rode along, at somewhat easy pace, they yet could not refrain from noticing, at first in silence, groups of people hurrying along in the direction of the high Wicklow ground; then the elder Miles, addressing William of Ballymanus, a handsome young man of about two or three and twenty, said:

"I fear there's some disturbance, an *emeute* somewhere. Look at all these groups of peasantry, with their families, hurrying along! I think I'll question them,—Hallo, friend! What's doing? Is it a fair you are all making for?"

The man so hailed, a bold-looking fellow, paused, and stared a moment defiantly at his interrogator, then, as if reassured, made respectful salutation.

"God save you kindly, sir. I didn't know ye at first in that *cotamore*. Yer Mr. Miles O'Byrne. Begorra, sir, it's for our lives we're all flyin'. The yoemen and the sodjers is all out upon Dunlavin an' the counthry round, an' thim that hasn't taken to their *traheens* afore 'em 'ill sup sorra, never fear."

"What's your name, my man? I don't remember you," said Miles, curbing his impatient steed.

"My name is Art O'Loughlin, yer honour, an' here comes thim that maybe ye do know," said he, as he made way for Mooney, O'Brien, and Johnny Doyle, who all came up together.

"My lads, what's the meaning of all this?" exclaimed Miles, addressing them after the usual greeting. "What wild expedition are you on, O'Brien and Mooney, whom I always thought to be steady men?"

"Sir, did ye hear of the tithe wrack at Tubber, an' how I lost poor Rose in it, an' the murder o' the neighbours?" cried O'Brien, with flaming eyes.

"Yes, I did, and I was sorry for you, Donough; but what are you going to do now?"

"Troth, I dunno, sir," replied Mooney, scratching his head, and extremely puzzled by the magnitude of the question propounded. "I lost my brother, Mick, God rest his soul, an' my fine *gossoon*, the light o' heaven to the brave boy!"

"Och, yer honour, what could we do?" remonstrated Johnny Doyle, in tone of deprecation, "since Father Murphy wouldn't let us use the pikes, but jist go away an' lave the place to 'em. I daresay, it's gutted the sheilin' is by this."

"And what are your father and mother doing?" said Miles, upon whose bosom a foreboding presage was, in spite of his efforts to disregard it, heavily and gradually stealing.

"Faix, I suppose, yer honour," philosophically answered Johnny, "if they ain't fools they'll folly the example o' the neighbours, an' not wait to be massacred an' burnt out. I daresay they're far on the way by this."

"I should think a man of your father's excellent character would have nothing to apprehend," said Miles, thoughtfully.

"Och, musha, yer honour," grinned O'Loughlin, "a man's character isn't worth a thraneen to him now-a-days; the biggest villain is worth a score o' honest min;—sure ye see it every day, sir;—it's only thim that thrives."

Without heeding the speaker, Miles looked interrogatingly at his companions. Young Miles spoke out enthusiastically:

"I lay a wager we'll be in the field before long; we'll have to be, in self-defence."

"Nonsense, Miles; don't talk folly," returned Miles, sharply. "William, what do you say? I've a mind to ride towards Dunlavin, an' see what's doin'."

"Not amiss," said the young man.

"But," interposed Gerald Byrne, "suppose we encoun-

ter the troops or the yoemen in any act of aggression or conflict, of what use could we be, four unarmed men? Our pacific intervention, I fear me, would avail little but to expose ourselves to insult and jeopardy. These are no times, trust me, for a foolish display of knight-errantry."

Miles seemed impressed with this view of the matter, for he turned to Mooney, and said:

"Whither are you bound?"

Mooney again manipulated his head, in token of no very definite purpose or plan. He did not wish to commit the plans of his party to any ear. Not a little agreeably surprised was he, therefore, when Miles, again addressing his companions, said:

"O'Dwyer bivouacs to-night at Glenmalure, and though I disavow and decline all connection with his hazardous course, yet, in the present emergency, I would fain have his friendly aid. Mil, you ride home, and summon Ned Burke to saddle the brown *garran*, Warlock, and follow us to Glenmalure. Forward, friends! If we can do no more than persuade the guerilla chief to convoy and shelter such homeless fugitives as may need protection till better times it will be something achieved."

Setting spurs to their steeds, the three gentlemen galloped off towards Glenmalure, crossing the country by short cuts well-known to the hunters of fox and hare, briskly followed at a swinging trot by O'Brien, Doyle, and Mooney. As for O'Loughlin, crossing a meadow, he spied and seized upon a fine young horse secured in a paddock. To open the gate, vault upon the animal, and kick him to full speed was the work of an instant. He soon came up with the advance party, rather to their astonishment, and Miles's query: "I say, friend, who mounted you?" he drolly answered: "Faix, I mounted myself, sir; that's the laste we may do, anyway, borra a loan from the negurs, och——"

It was a wild, picturesque scene that met the gaze of Miles O'Byrne and his companions, as descending into the deep glen, embosomed in profound silence and darkness, and dismounting from their steeds, which they tied to a tree, they groped their way along some hundred yards, till in

the distance a red light, glimmering through the dense foliage of wood and thicket, revealed the outlaw's lair. Giving the password to the sentinel, they proceeded, till the murmur of many voices fell upon their ear, and presently they found themselves in the midst of at least a hundred men, sitting, lying, standing in every attitude beneath the leafy awning, and precipitous cliffs looming overhead, and curtaining them on every side, the lurid glow of a huge turf fire burnishing every dark, swarthy visage, and playing in light and shadow upon the *tableau* of grouped forms, all fixed with eyes intent upon the new-comers, and armed to the teeth for offence or defence as need might serve. From the congregated mass stepped one, a chief in every gesture, from the eagle eye, the lion front, the martial step, the free and courteous bearing.

"*A cead mille failthe*, friends!" he exclaimed, grasping the somewhat coldly-tendered hand of Miles and the warmer ones of Gerald and William of Ballymanus. "I knew you'd come in ere long to augment our ranks. You could not help yourselves; the spirit of man, if it be not altogether depraved, degraded, or the divine impress of God and manhood stamped out, crushed out of it and lost in the grovelling slave, must assert itself. A little while since, my friends, and you held me a frenzied lunatic to be feared, a rebel to be shunned, a brigand to be reprobated. Peace!—let me say on; then reply. In vain, like stout Wallace and gallant Bruce, pointing to our bleeding country's wounds, I beckoned with impatient hand, and cried with loud voice for compatriots to aid me to grapple with the assassins that stabbed her again and again. Prudent wisdom would not hear me, timid caution slunk aside. Then, in my great wrath, I shouted: 'Come to me, ye oppressed ones, ye persecuted, ye trampled outcasts, in the name of the God whom we serve, and the country which we love; I will be your father and protector, a shield to defend and a sword to avenge you. They came; they flocked to my call, those helpless ones that had nought to lose and all to gain; these, and these alone, are the tools with which I shall work. Brigand!—yes, I glory in the

title. What though my followers live by transgressing laws of men who have violated all laws of God and nature in their regard; what though, because nor wealth of spoil nor factious power back our claim to rights of citizenship and humanity, we must in secret do that which Draconic legislators do in the full blaze of day—rend back, back from the tyrant a pittance for support—we are stigmatised as felons. The knave who frames the law, sentencing to death his fellow-man, insisting upon his right to bread, names his act justice; the outlaw redresses him at midnight, and he is branded a murderer, a brigand! What is the distinction between the ermined peer seated in the senate and the naked brigand lurking in the cave? One is an inhuman setter-up of decrees unsanctioned by nature to debase us to the condition of crawling reptiles. We are bold defiers of those decrees, which our manhood's instincts spurn. Brigand! Yes! So was Wallace a brigand, whose honoured name is shrined gloriously in his country's annals. So was Bruce a brigand, till Bannockburn crowned him a monarch. So had our Brian been a brigand, if hurling the Dane from his dominion he had not died a king, with the diadem upon his brow! I've done. Now, friends, speak. What's your pleasure?"

"Long life an' more power to ye, captain. Begorra, it's yerself is the man we want!" exultingly muttered O'Loughlin, surveying O'Dwyer with admiring eyes, while Miles, with a grimace of comic humour, turned to Gerald and William Byrne, and said:

"I don't know well what we want—not commissions, I believe; but to let you know, O'Dwyer, the troops and yeomen are billeted on Dunlavin and Tubber. We feel some concern for the safety of our friends, and to ask, in the event of need, could you help us to rescue them?"

"I can tell you more about your friends, by scouts just come in before you," said O'Dwyer. "Tubber is in ruins, every hamlet and sheiling is a blazing bonfire; those who have not fled have been ill-treated and massacred; to-morrow or next day they fall on Naas, Dunlavin, and Carnew; I must be there to levy my recruits. 'Tis on

such I can count—outraged men, whose human natures have been changed into the tiger—ay, these I can fashion and sway to any deed.”

A wild chorus of acclamation drowned all his efforts to proceed, while O’Loughlin and De Lacy, recognising, shook hands vehemently, and Miles, growing faint and benumbed with horror, leaned heavily against a tree : this O’Dwyer observing with covert smile, called for refreshments ; a keg of whiskey was instantly produced, and briskly tapped into a score of wooden noggins held for the purpose, till the captain roared out, while he cut a haunch of cold roast venison :

“Hold, you fellows, my work needs sober men.”

“Never fear, yer honour,” shouted a chorus. “Only a sup to pledge the raw recruits,” and while they were doing the hospitable, and Miles, thinking every moment an hour till they were off, entreated O’Dwyer to set out at once for the scene of slaughter, young Miles and Ned Burke, equally impatient for the adventure, came in, speedily followed by O’Brien and Mooney, who, taking example by O’Loughlin, had availed themselves of forced loans of nimble steeds, to expedite their progress. O’Dwyer’s heart swelled as he beheld the reinforcements coming in, and Miles O’Byrne’s phlegmatic spirit waking up in the cause, “Ay,” he muttered aside to one who stood near him, a man of ordinary stature and feature, in whom the casual eye saw nothing to distinguish him from the plebeian herd, save that in his aspect he bore the semblance of a cultured mind, and a soul above the level, “I deemed, M’Alister, not long could his footstep tread this spot, of which every rood is consecrated by the patriot blood of his race, and not feel the heroic impulse fire his bosom ; and yet Hugh is worth a score of such tardy proselytes, a cause in which to stand still to deliberate the *pros* and *cons* of success is to lose it ; ours must be the desperate venture of reckless men, who go forth with life in hand to win or lose it on the stake.”

“I wish we had Hugh O’Byrne, and Byrne of Cabin-teely,” observed M’Alister.

“Let pass him of Cabinteely ; we want no heart of hare,

or namby-pamby two-siders, lukewarm partisans to compromise us, but Hugh we must have; these whole-blooded men, once they embark their ship, stick to it through wreck and tempest to the last. Come, bestir thee; I see our impatient levies are on the move, Miles the prudent leading the van."

"You know the best routes and passes by which to avoid untimely encounter with the troops, or laying open to them your inaccessible haunts, O'Dwyer," said Gerald Byrne, lingering behind to join the chief, who replacing in his belt a brace of horse pistols, the looks of which he had been examining, made answer:

"From Ben Edar to Cape Clear, from Skerries to the Causeway I could walk blindfolded from east to west. My sleuth-hounds follow my track; wild as storms, silent as moonbeams, they rush and glide by secret path through the windings of hill and glen; and parliament may boast its conclave of braying donkeys and chattering apes leagued for the country's ruin, but they lack the lion heart, the cunning of the fox, and the sagacity of the fleet hound, that meet in my senate. Forward! Scouts and rangers, scour the way." Up sprung a score of recumbent forms skulking among the trees, as the brigand's horn sounded the march, anticipating strife, which the inflamed passions of outraged hearts made sweet to contemplate and bold to dare. De Lacy, O'Brien, Healy, Mooney, O'Loughlin, Doyle, and many others, once so peaceful, industrious, and submissively loyal, bounded forward, pike in hand, and flourishing the weapons with wild cries, like fiends let loose, they rushed along, yet keeping close beside their captain, watching for the signal that should direct their first enterprise. It was breaking dawn as they left the covert of their retreat, and, compelled to pursue devious routes, and time their pace to avoid the risk of hazarding any open encounter, for which O'Dwyer did not deem his small band, chiefly armed with pikes, equally matched, it was not likely they would reach their destination before nightfall, if even so soon, should they find it necessary to make a *detour* to escape ambushed parties.

Meantime, waiting for the arrival of Esther's mother,

her old friend, Mrs. Lanigan, and all unconscious of the scene of wreck and butchery being perpetrated but little more than a mile distant, in the family she had left well and peaceful so lately, nor having even any notice of the conflagration, owing to the situation of the hut in the hollow of a declivity, isolated behind a projecting turn of the hill, Kitty, surrounded by a fine group of rosy children, sat by the little fire, darning a stocking, and superintending the boiling of a kettle and the simmering of a pot upon the hob, while Esther, yet bemoaning the fate of her husband, untimely out off in his prime, feeling overcome with pain and trouble, went to lie down awhile upon the bed within, a little chamber screened off by a rickety door from the outside.

"*Huist*, childhre, don't make such a noise," said Kitty, addressing the urohins, some of whom were playing marbles, and others gabbling in noisy clamour about the proprietorship of a top. "Roan, Teresa, honey, an' see is there any sign o' Cathleen, she ought to have been here long ago wid the tae an' sugar, an' things from Cnoc-na-draithe," she added, in continuation to the blacksmith's second daughter, a child of ten, who finding home lonely in the absence of her father and brothers, had left three younger sisters with their mother, just recovering from fever, and with the oldest, a girl of fifteen, had come down for awhile to play with her cousins.

"I wondher what can be keeping her," mused Kitty, beginning to feel anxious about the messenger she had deputed to the next village, about two miles off, for tea and other necessaries, sure she knew we were in a hurry an' wouldn't delay.

"Me'll go see is gran'moder, comin'," cried a merry little fellow, running to the door, as Teresa came in, saying :

"Ne'er a sign o' her I see ;—but sure she won't be long now, anyway, for she has to be back to make the stirabout agin father oomes home wid the boys."

Meanwhile, trudging along through intricate lanes and field paths, known to her childhood, inhaling with feelings

of rapture the exhilarating summer evening breeze, laden with perfume from the hills, but missing the sweetest incense of all which at this hour was wont to regale the home-returning peasant from his daily toil—the smell of the furze-bush and bramble fire, sending light wreaths of blue curling smoke to meet the fleecy clouds above—an elderly woman, burdened with a heavy basket, came wending along in the direction of the sheiling. Missing, too, the song of the milkmaid in the fields, and the voices of children at play on the moors, she felt an unwonted sadness, enhanced rather than dispelled by the warbling of the merl, the thrush, the finch, and the linnet, in the brake, for it made the sense of solitude more complete. High in the blue ether a lark was carolling a joyous anthem to the setting sun, and a cuckoo from some distant grove was ringing out his wild notes, with none to mimic a reply. But at length the weary traveller spied her destined bourne, and loud shouts of, “Here she is! Here’s gran, mammy;—Kitty, come;” and a rush was made *en masse* of the delighted friends to greet her; and a simultaneous crush of clasping and caressing arms soon revived again her flagging spirits, and banished every other emotion than that of pleasure at meeting her daughter, grandchildren, and Kitty; and soon installed in state in the best chair and the snuggest corner of the hearth, the great basket disgorged the presents with which it was laden: a miscellaneous collection of tea, sugar, cakes, toys, frocks for the little girls, pinafores for the little boys, a petticoat for Kitty, and for Esther a lovely amber Cashmere shawl, with lilacs on it, and the makings of a blue merino gown, together with two bottles of wine, three gold guineas, and a scarlet velvet waistcoat for Mick, all presents from Miss Alphonse Fitzpatrick, whose late accession to fortune she dilated upon to her intensely interested audience, interluded with a history of Mr. Antony, whom she well remembered a fine young man, going off thirty years ago to seek his fortune, which said fortune she magnified with such broad colouring of imagery, that any hitherto known romance of fancy failed and fell far below the summit attained by him.

A few happy hours flew by as minutes; for as yet the young wife would not pain her mother by sad tidings of poor Mick, all inquiries for whom she for a time eluded, and Kitty had for the while put away thought of Cathleen Mooney; but when at length conversation began to flag, as night came on, and the children crept to their litter of straw, and were soon fast asleep, and Esther went to bed, leaving the old woman saying her Rosary by the fire, Kitty, once more uneasy, said, in tone of distress:

"I dunno what could have happened Cathleen? I'll go down with ye, Tessie, to yer mother. Maybe she wint home afther all; for sure the screams Nora Lanigan heerd, as she came along on the coach, couldn't be hers. She was cute enough to keep out o' danger, an' I warned her to keep off the highway an' to hide if she seen any o' Carhampton's soldiers, or Hussions prowlin' about; they're the scourge an' curse o' the counthry, the vagabones. An', glory be to God, but all this day I've a thrimblin' over me, like one in an ague; anyhow, *alanna*, if they ain't coome home, don't let on to yer father or mother, or the grandfather, but what she stayed wid Essy, till Winnie Daly the midwife coomes, and I'll go see afther her."

Teresa promised compliance; the two set off, Kitty's heart too surely presaging what her mind refused to believe, that never again should her eyes behold the missing one, who, set upon on her return by a party of yeomen, had been dragged off to a quarry, fearfully maltreated, and left to perish where she lay. But Kitty Burke's good angel seemed to befriend her that night: she had not more than an hour left the dwelling of Esther Mooney when Nora Lanigan, having said her night prayers, tidied the little room, and covered over the embers of the fire, prepared to lie down, when she heard several footsteps approaching.

"It must be Mick coomin' wid Winnie Daly, an' maybe some *sthama* that wants a shakedown for the night, tho' I think there's more nor one by the thrampin'; an' I'm sure I dunno where he'll put 'em, barrin, there's a shed widout," soliloquised Nora, stepping softly, not to awaken the sleeper, whose woebegone, pallid mien seemed to indi-

cate need for repose, mental and physical. A fierce thumping at the door expedited her movement, and with a chiding reproof on her lips, while she drew the little bolt, she stood still and mute, petrified at the too ominous sight of seven or eight soldiers, who, without preface, shouted to her :

"Stand back, ye hag, an' clear the passage!"

"Musha, boys honey, what is it ye want at this hour o' the night, disturbin' two lone women, goin' to twelve o'clock?"

"Oi say, Missus, clear out o' the way, an' give us none o' yer jaw," cried a most debauched-looking trooper, speaking with a strong voice of authority; "yer's isn't the first or last pigstoy we mean to search to-night, under our commission, for arms, an' wotever else takes our fancy, haw! haw! haw! Come on, Dodd an' Brown."

"For the love o' the blissed Lord," cried Nora Lanigan, in terror, as a groan of anguish from the room within burst upon her ear, "don't ax to coome in to-night! My daughther is jist about lyin'-in, an' it'll kill her."

"Now, go say a *Pater an' Ave* for yer luck," roared all, in boisterous mirth; "we're the docthors 'll help her. Quick, clear the way!"

"Hold!" cried Nora, in despair; "here are three gold guineas an' two pounds in silver—all we have;—take it an' lave us in peace, if ye be men born of human mothers!"

"Docthor's fee!" yelled a second trooper, clutching at the bribe. "Come on, Hog, an' Thorp, an' Gutterly! an' let's see if it ain't pikes is lyin'-in, ha! ha!"

They rushed on, and thrusting aside the feeble old woman, amid the shrieks of the alarmed children, proceeded on their career of iniquity, brief but terrible. An hour later, when Kitty returned, alone, from her unsuccessful search for Cathleen Mooney, she beheld, astounded, the roof of Esther's hut on fire. Hastening in, she discovered Nora Lanigan prostrate in a swoon upon the hearth, and upon the floor of the interior the dead body of Esther, with a new-born infant at her feet, which just lived till she had poured upon its head the water of baptism, and sent the unfledged soul into the light of eternity.

Perhaps the reader may pause aghast, and deem that such pictures of '98 must be exaggerated—the outcome of diseased imagination—the hyperbole of extravagant story; or else he may perhaps hope that they are restricted to one or two isolated cases. Unfortunately historic annals and family records attest that, at the same hour, on the same night, and for weeks and months, these scenes of carnage and butchery were enacted, of revolting outrage and crime, which for atrocity have not been exceeded by the horrors of the Indian mutiny, or those inflicted by the fanatic Turk in Bulgaria, for there is a pinnacle beyond which, with the utmost ingenuity long-armed vice cannot go, or even despotism stretch its iron rod; and to this verge remorselessly, inhumanly, Christian England commissioned a hundred and sixty thousand military, backed up and abetted by an Orange aristocracy, an Orange yeomanry, and an infamous Orange magistracy, supplied from the dregs and scum of society, to destroy a people, in the mad determination to abolish their nationality. “But why revive shocking reminiscences of terrible deeds past and gone?” some may ask. I answer: “No deed that has ever been enacted upon earth, passes from before the eye of God; evil may be repented and forgiven, but satisfaction remains.” “Woe to them who build a city with blood!” The blood of Ireland has built up the cities and inflated the pride of her conqueror. “When in the fulness of time her cup is brimming over, and the hour of retribution comes, the nations of the earth, remembering her iniquity, shall trace in her humiliation the unerring hand of Divine Justice meting unto her as she meted unto others.”

CHAPTER XXI.

LORD CASTLEREAGH'S DINNER PARTY.

"No patriot feeling binds them to the soil
Whose tombs and shrines their fathers have not reared;
Their glance is cold indifference, and their toil
But to destroy what ages have revered,
As if exulting sternly to erase
Whate'er might prove that land had nursed
A nobler race."

HEMANS.

HIS chapel wrecked, his flock scattered by persecution, himself constrained to seek safety in temporary retreat, and hopeless of redress from appeal to any civil law or humane sympathy at the hands of the tyrant faction that now ruled the destinies of the afflicted land, Father Fitzpatrick, musing within the precincts of his solitary chamber, in the same house in which Hugh O'Byrne lodged in South King-street, the day after his arrival in town, had at length, even as a drowning man grasps at a straw, decided upon taking that very step which some while since he had, when suggested by his sister, on her visit to him at Lucan, repudiated as useless and vain, to call upon Lord Castlereagh, and use what personal interest he might yet have retained with his college compeer in favour of the distressed victims of oppression. "Worse than fail I cannot," soliloquised the young priest, rising, so soon as he had arrived at the conclusion of his meditation. "Meanwhile," he added, as he donned his well-brushed, threadbare coat, "I feel very like a small duplicate Moses, setting out to plead the cause of my Israelites with this petty Pharaoh. In good sooth, I expect no better success. Yet what lies in my power I shall do, and to Him and his fiat, in whose hands are the hearts of men, commit the issue of the enterprise." He took up his hat, passed down

stairs, and in the hall met Hugh O'Byrne and Maurice O'Driscoll, also going out. The latter, with cheeks flushing at the unexpected recognition of the young man, whom as yet he only knew as the brother of Alphonse, but for which reason, experiencing combined pleasure with surprise, cordially extended a greeting hand; while Hugh O'Byrne, who only had known the stranger by sight as a Catholic clergyman, doffed his hat in respectful salutation, and stood by as O'Driscoll accosted him.

"Happy to meet you, and renew acquaintance, sir, if I may so take liberty to designate our former brief *rencontre*, or if not, at least lay claim to it, in right of that of your sister, Miss Fitzpatrick."

Father Fitzpatrick bowed with affable smile, as he cordially shook hands with Maurice:

"We, priests are cosmopolitans, sir. We are every man's property, while owning at the same time to individual proclivities and special friendships that more particularly engage our interest, it gives me pleasure to number you among mine."

"And since I have a prescriptive right, and find your reverence conveniently domiciled under the same roof with me, I shall, waiving further ceremony, simply take possession of you," laughed Hugh. "Here is my apartment, *au premiere*, as we say in France. Pray, walk in, sir."

"You will excuse me just now," said Father Fitzpatrick, "when I tell you I am going on an important embassy to Lord Castlereagh. You have, no doubt, heard of the burning of my little chapel at Lucan, and the miseries inflicted upon my poor people by the licentious and unbridled troops quartered upon them everywhere—in Leixlip, Celbridge, Sallins, Lucan, Naas, and through all Kildare, and from whose outrages they fly like sheep pursued by wolves. Well, I am going to call upon the Chief Secretary to represent the state of the country, and that if something be not timely done to avert the evil, men who were peaceful and loyal, well-conducted and industrious members of society yesterday, will to-morrow have become, in self-defence, desperadoes of the worst type,

outraging themselves all law, human and divine, and at once the retributive scourge and terror of the land."

"And you hope, by your mediation, to move Lord Castlereagh's bowels of compassion—to relent in his hideous policy," said O'Driscoll? "My dear fellow"—he shook his head—"did you come to consult me as an augur or soothsayer, knowing my lord as I do, I should give the oracular response: 'Spare yourself the pain of disappointment; the divinity will not be propitious to your suit.'"

"'Tis not likely," chimed in Hugh O'Byrne, "that this British Robespierre, whose policy is to murder the country, will be diverted from his aim by any appeal to mercy;—as well expect the bloodhound that has fixed his fangs in a victim to relax his clutch till he has drained its life blood."

"I anticipate as much," said Father Fitzpatrick, sadly. "I have no hope, save in the power divine of Him in whose name I go forth to plead. What my success may be you shall know on my return. Adieu, *au revoir*." And as it was now rather late in the day, Father Fitzpatrick hastened his departure, his friends accompanying him to the threshold, and wishing him a prosperous return.

Arriving at the residence of the Chief Secretary, Father Fitzpatrick sent up his card, and had nearly an hour to wait in the crowded antechamber before the state functionary could spare leisure from the pressure of multitudinous business to see him. Accordingly, he was then ushered with much state into the presence of Lord Castlereagh, who, in lieu of the urbane condescension of dignity, received his visitor with the cold, formal ceremony of pride. Yet not long was the *hauteur* of the *nouveau grand* able to maintain its chilling reserve in the genial glow of the sunny smile and unaffected simplicity of heart-warm greeting with which, like a southern zephyr breathing on an avalanche, his college friend greeted him. Old memories crowded upon his brain, old times came back with all their associations to soften his bosom; imperceptibly sliding from his altitude, Castlereagh returned the pressure of the other's hand, looked amiably, whilst

also speculatively, into his eyes, and exclaimed in, for him, rather demonstrative gush of expression :

"I say, old fellow, where have you turned up from? How comes it we have never met till now?"

"Stewart," began Father Fitzpatrick; then, correcting himself, "my Lord Castlereagh——"

"Never mind, let it be Stewart; we are too old friends to stand on punctilios," blandly returned the Chief Secretary. "What have you been doing—travelling, eh? We were always good friends, Fitz. You might have let me know something from time to time of your whereabouts and your doings."

"They could scarcely have interested you," returned Father Fitzpatrick. "Our paths lay so far apart, and verging to opposite goals, we were never likely to have met again, had not events and circumstances beyond our control dictated otherwise."

"I understand," replied Castlereagh. "I surmise by your *tout ensemble* that you have embraced holy orders; while I have tacked myself to the orders of the powers that be; nevertheless, old fellow, that need have been no hindrance to our intercourse, and it might have come in my way to give you a shove up the steeple. Will you excuse my taking the freedom of an old chum, which I shall only do upon your making me a promise?"

"Name it," said the other.

"I have to run over for half an hour to meet his Excellency at the Castle. I am like Ixion on the wheel, for ever in a state of rotation, as you see; and those who would have me must snatch at me as they may. I have a few friends to dine to-day, come and join our circle."

Father Fitzpatrick looked disconcerted, glanced at his costume, and hesitated. Castlereagh's quick eye detected his embarrassment.

"Never mind your coat, man, the best of our fellows, except Clonmel and Buck Whaley, take a cynical fit betimes and sport a seedy coat, and a churchman is under special privilege to abjure the pomp and vanity of dress."

"But, much though I thank your lordship, I wish for a personal interview; I crave it as a boon—I've much to say

to you," eagerly returned Father Fitzpatrick, with importunate vehemence of manner, and every feature eloquent with earnest anxiety.

Castlereagh seemed annoyed: "Well, well; there's a good fellow. Let me go now;—come and dine, and tell me your case, and I'll see what can be done. I haven't a moment to spare;—count on my service. Adieu!—early dinner—seven o'clock sharp," and the Chief Secretary vanished, leaving Father Fitzpatrick disappointed and debating whether or not he would accept the invitation. After some consultation of the *pros* and *cons*, the votes in favour of "Ay" carried the point, and at seven o'clock "The Rev. Mr. Fitzpatrick" was pompously announced in due form, and entered the saloon where already were assembled with the noble host some fifteen or sixteen guests, in the midst of which *entourage* the shabby-coated humble priest looked strangely out of place, as shrinking and diffident, he encountered the brunt of high-swollen pride, interrogating with inquisitive eyes: "Who is this fellow?" Lord Castlereagh, with insinuating grace, advanced, shook hands cordially with his guest, whom he thanked for the favour of his company, and introduced him to Lords Carhampton, Clare, and Kingsborough; Captains Erskine and Edmond; Claudius Beresford, Hussey Burgh, Buck Whaley, Rev. Nathaniel Lamb, Dr. Falstaff, bishop of some South Sea island; and a Spanish-American hidalgo Don Antonio de San Luis, from South America, as an old and valued college friend, under whose auspices, and with whose co-operation he had got into scrapes *ad infinitum*, and out of scrapes, with a joint facility and felicity that no mortal brains, save those of an Hibernian could have achieved, long ere his own genius, developing in State politics, had climbed the beanstalk to such ambitious height. "You remember our exploit, Fitzpatrick, when we robbed the Hesperides, guarded so well by that ferocious old dragon Scrub, and his savage Cerberus? Ah-ha-ha!"

"Confess, my lord, you and my associates in the enterprise treated me very badly upon that occasion," smiled Father Fitzpatrick, feeling more at ease, and

glancing humorously upon the now more condescending circle.

"Yes, faith," laughed his lordship; "we used you much as the monkey in the fable used the cat—in other words, you were our cat's-paw to procure the fruit, of which, thanks to your wit, you escaped your share of the booty, a sound thrashing."

And here the sounding of the dinner gong, and the portal thrown open by a servant in livery, suspended further converse. The gentlemen filed out in order, Lord Castlereagh taking the head of his table, Lord Carhampton the foot, the rest ranging themselves in order. Father Fitzpatrick sat between Lord Clare and the Rev. Nathaniel Lamb, on the left of the host, opposite Lord Kingsborough and Hussey Burgh, who were on his right. Oysters, soup, sherry, fish, *entrées*, sweetbread, chickens, veal fricandeau, pigeons, champagne, saddle of roast mutton, tongue, forced potatoes, *purée aux épinards*, asparagus, lamb, salad; then second course, and third course, followed by *dessert*, ice, jelly, fruit, biscuits, Port, Burgundy, Marsala, grapes, olives, cigars for amateurs on a silver tray; in a word, no luxury, foreign or home, that could minister to the fastidious appetite, or taste of pampered affluence, was omitted from the well-served banquet, to which all did ample justice; the play of wit, and flow of conversation enlivened the board, and, restricted as yet to casual topics, added zest to the entertainment, with much hilarity and laughter: it was altogether a pleasant reunion, and so Father Fitzpatrick would have found it could he have divested his mind of the ever present memory of the errand upon which he had come, if he could have shaken off sense of the responsibility that like an incubus weighed upon his heart, if he could but for an interval have lost sight of visions of distress, famine-stricken forms, and agonised faces haunting his mental vision, or shaken off the dull pressure of the weight of the long chain of ages, that made him feel bowed down, and crushed in spirit, as a slave surreptitiously intruded into the society of free men. After the cloth had been removed, and the waiters withdrawn, with pondering brow he sat

absorbed in thought, till the voice of Hussey Burgh, addressing the South American gentleman beside him, engaged his attention, and rousing from his momentary apathy, he fixed his eyes upon each guest.

"That was a melancholy catastrophe, Don Antonio, the loss of the *Infanta*, with the crew and passengers, last week in Newcastle. Were you the only one saved from the wreck?" said Hussey, passing a decanter of wine to the foreigner, an elderly man, of mild physiognomy, who replied in fluent English, but with a foreign accent, slowly and gravely:

"Yes, Senor, it was a bad business. There were seven passengers, of whom I alone was saved, and brought alive to shore by a gentleman, who rode his horse out into the surf, and contrived to grapple me with a hook. Several persons, I must do justice and say, made similarly gallant attempts; but the sea ran so high, and the storm raged so wildly, and the night was so dark, that he alone was successful. The vessel soon went to pieces and drifted along the coast; but the captain and one sailor, I believe, managed to scramble on shore."

"Rather an unlucky expedition of yours, sir, whatever business rendered it incumbent upon you to visit the Green Isle, in the present disordered state of affairs," said Claudius Beresford, with sly underglance of significance at Lord Castlereagh, who he knew held the opinion that the stranger, a man of immense funded wealth in Great Britain, and large landed property in the State of Louisiana, had come to Ireland upon some sinister mission connected with the United Irishmen and their manœuvres; but, without heeding or else noticing the drift of the invidious address, Don Antonio, gently stroking his long silver beard, made answer in placid, off-handed sort of way, and apparently with thoughts more concentrated upon his own affairs than upon the speaker or the company:

"In sooth, yes; it was disastrous." After a pause, he added: "But mine has been, from first to last, a life of adventure. A merchant trading his own vessels to all parts of the known world must needs betimes meet with counter-checks, and lightly I hold the loss of an item of property,

balanced against the worst mishap—the loss of twenty lives—that of one amongst them, near and dear to me as my own.” His eye dimmed, but it was evident he was a man of iron nerve and resolution; for he stifled the rising emotion, though he could not control the mournful inflection of his voice, as he piously added a fervent aspiration: “*Fiat voluntas tua.*”

“Was it, then, solely upon commercial speculation, Senor, you came to Ireland?” blandly inquired the host; “and have you been in the habit of trading to and fro?”

“No, my lord. This is the first time I entered an Irish port—not so much for commercial motive as to make inquiries about some friends of my childhood whose memory is dear to me. Cork had been my destination; but driven from our course by baffling winds, we were cast in a storm upon the dangerous coast of Arklow, where, being rescued as described, after sojourning a couple of days in the house of my brave deliverer, I repaired to the residence of my friend—the South American Consul—Senor Gonzague d’Opelousas, whose kind introduction to this gentleman”—he bowed to Buck Whaley—“has been the medium of my acquaintance with other kind friends, first among whom I am proud to rank your lordship.”

Lord Castlereagh bent his head in response: “I hope the pleasure of your acquaintance will long be ours to enjoy, Senor?”

“I don’t know,” returned the other, thoughtfully. “The consul is making inquiries about my friends; the period of my sojourn will be regulated in some measure by his success.”

“You ought to settle among us here,” said Buck Whaley—“You don’t know what a jolly fine time you’d have among us; ’tis the very garden of Elysium for diversion, frolic and fun.”

The stranger smiled sadly. “It is, indeed, beautiful country, fair as the hand of Providence ever fashioned: changeful skies, temperate climate, varied scenery, quite unlike our gorgeous region, where we languish and die of too transcendent glory, like

blossoms withering in the burning blaze of noontide; yet with pained heart I have noticed that its inhabitants seem to be the most miserable on the face of creation: their limbs are scantily swathed in foetid rags, their frames are emaciated, and in every woe-begone visage that meets the eye you read a tale of suffering, labour, and famine. How is it?"

"Ah, my friend, how is it you may well ask," exclaimed Dr. Falstaff, the Bishop of Otaheite; and the American turned to look at the Churchman, who with limpid eyes of no definite hue; small, thick-set nose; diminutive mouth, *minus* lips, and resembling a slit made where that feature should be; round, bald head, and face resting upon a pair of broad shoulders, devoid of the isthmus of neck, suggested the idea of an apple-dumpling, soft and white and glossy, set in its perfect rotundity upon a dish. "These Irish, sir, are to-day what they were yesterday, and will be to-morrow, and much, I fear, to the end of time, what they've been from the beginning—idolaters, sun worshippers, Romanists, Philistines"—the Churchman halted, and resumed spasmodically:—"have rejected the call to regeneration; hence, accursed of the Lord, behold them a living testimony of his wrath, outcasts of grace, like the unbelieving Jews, their undoubted ancestors, the pariahs and refuse of the land, the by-word and scorn of the world!"

"That is exactly it," said Lord Castlereagh, smiling blandly upon the eloquent expounder of a state of things he had rather not been asked to explain according to his conscientious conviction. "The Irish are by nature an idle; ungrateful, turbulent, rebellious people, whom we can only govern by the rod of coercion, in lieu of the gospel of clemency. 'Tis very sad!"

The American made no response, as with flush mantling his pale cheek, and a heavy cloud darkening yet deeper his swarthy brow, he bent forward on folded arms, in silent cogitation. Not so Father Fitzpatrick, who with spirit of fire flashing in every awakened and animated feature, and imparting an air of grandeur to his aspect that took everyone by surprise, so unexpected was the transition

from the meek humilit ; and diffidence that had excited their contempt to the majestic mien, that commanded their respect, turned to the self-satisfied prelate, and said, in tone clear, firm, and concise :

"Your grace shall pardon me. And you, my Lord Castlereagh, with all your noble guests, whose forbearance I crave a moment, while I give bold denial to those charges made against my defamed country and its suffering people. I had not designed at this present moment, my lord," he continued, addressing the Chief Secretary, "to enter upon the subject—an all-important one—of my interview with your lordship, but his grace's challenge has precipitated my course, and perhaps no more fitting opportunity could offer than now, in presence of these gentlemen of influence and power, to appeal to that Christianity, their pride and boast, in favour of the poor, peaceable, industrious, well-disposed, and loyal people, especially of my neighbourhood of Lucan and the surrounding district, where I have been eye-witness to atrocities and persecutions, perpetrated, I am sorry to say, in the name of Government, and under your sanction, my Lord Castlereagh, and yours, my Lord Carhampton, nay more, by your very orders, which, permit me to add, were you made the objects of in your own person, would goad your human nature to frenzy, and which, if not expeditiously assuaged by more lenient measures, will assuredly bear most direful result ; in a word, I warn you, statesmen and governors of the land, you are whipping the nation with scourges into wild insurrection, only to be stifled in the blood of thousands, whose cries for vengeance will be heard in heaven against you, and repaid in blood upon your own heads and those of your children !"

Breaking the temporary lull of deep silence that had fallen upon the astonished circle, and gazing with unutterable malignity upon the undaunted speaker, whose words, salient and probing, had pierced straight to the mark, Lord Carhampton said, with a sneer :

"Methought you were a pious parson, I perceive now you are a politician. How shall we requite in thanks the immense service you have rendered in apprising our

ignorance of the state of the country? You are, I take it, one of Berwick's curates?"

"No, sir, I am a Catholic priest."

The stillness that followed this avowal more eloquently expressed the amazement of the company than the loudest exclamations or wildest commotion. Lord Castlereagh astounded but composed, stared inquisitively upon the young man, whom, remembering his feats of genius and high intellectual acumen, he had even within that very hour been fitting into a place in the working of the complicated machinery of his department, as one whose abilities would prove an admirable coadjutor to his own; in blank disappointment, he now sat and stared upon his quondam associate. At length, with cold satirical smile, he said: "I'm sorry for you, Fitz, old fellow! I had hoped to have been of use to you; but priests are not in favour with our Government, else you should be a dean, and I've no voice with your Pontiff, else you should be a cardinal. What can I do for you?"

"For myself I want nothing, my lord; for my people I only ask mercy."

"Very reasonable," scowled Lord Clare, whose lineaments were not moulded to smile. "But what is their recommendation to mercy—obstinate rebellion and opposition to the Government?"

"I deny that," responded Father Fitzpatrick, drily. "I know my people; I can answer for their submission to the law, if it will but do them justice."

"Are they so loyal indeed?" simpered Castlereagh. "Then we have much wronged them;—they will, of course, prove it by voting with us for the Union."

"If you make that the test of their loyalty, to vote for a measure that common sense denotes will be injurious to their country, I reply they will not, nor can they," firmly replied Father Fitzpatrick.

"There's the Jesuit rampant," cried Lord Kingsborough, fiercely. "How, in the name of common sense, priest, can you be silly enough to strive to throw dust in our eyes, garble up patriotism with allegiance to the British Crown, and tell us you are loyal men? As well might a

privateer hoist the British flag, and carry on piracy as a vessel of mark."

"You distort the argument, as others wrest texts of Scripture to sanction its innovation; patriotism is perfectly compatible with loyalty when loyalty demands no more for Cæsar than Cæsar's due," retorted Father Fitzpatrick, warmly. "If you persist in exacting more than that, and, like Nebuchodonosor, assume divine prerogative, you cannot expect people to shape their conscience to your requirements; and if you will persist in goading them to madness you must abide retaliation."

"We are prepared for that," said Lord Castlereagh. "We desire nothing better than that the mobility should give us an opportunity of showing them who will be master. Those same revolutionary principles, which disseminated, uncourbed and unchecked, by wild democrats, have made a Haceldama of France, and overturned the throne, shall be met in sterner conflict here; and if any go to the wall it shall be the hydra-headed populace and the fanatical abettors of insubordination. But for the matter of that, Fitz, I am quite willing to agree with you, if it please you, that the country is at present delightfully tranquil—thanks to the energetic proceedings of my Lords Carhampton and Kingsborough, with the efficient measures of such magistrates as Beresford and others—enjoying, and likely to enjoy, the blessings of profound peace."

"I gainsay you there," cried Hussey Burgh, glancing with kindly sympathy at the now silent and dejected priest. "Thanks to those measures you laud, the country is in a state of smothered war, as I have before declared; and if the volcano burst ere long, and erupt the elements of destruction far and wide, beware the issue."

"That is exactly the pith of the argument," said Castlereagh. "The country, exteriorly quiet, is interiorly heaving with convulsive throes, to assuage which the patient must needs be bled. Information has no later than this morning been conveyed to the Castle of pikes being found upon the estates of some gentlemen hitherto passing for well-affected to us, with sundry criminating

evidence against parties little suspected of lending themselves to revolt ;—it is very painful."

"To whom painful?" demanded Hussey Burgh, ironically. "The parties who will receive patents of confiscated land?"

"Alas! how true it is that the *via media* which the Church of England, in its spirit of toleration only to be compared to the tepidity of the Laodiceans, has displayed, has only paved the way to all this scandal and obstruction, anarchy and sedition," exclaimed the Rev. Nathaniel Lamb, exploding in a pathetic groan, and with a nasal twang, meant to be plaintive, but which degenerated into a whine. "Verily, I reiterate my assertion, that our moderation hath been the bane of the nation, conniving at the ungodly in their evil course, and holding out, as it were, a premium to the arrogant upholders of the benighted, hardening them against Gospel light. Yea," he added, becoming excited as he warmed with zeal, and with a scathing look of ire at the priest, "far from me be the day that any morbid fear of Jesuit's vengeance, or their necromantic arts, should daunt me from denouncing the judgments of the Lord against sinners, and proclaiming eternal war with Belial and Rome!"

"Hear, hear!" cried Hussey Burgh, with ludicrous expression of humour, half-annoyed, half-amused, as with sidelong glance he noted the solemnly offended mien of the taciturn American, and the pained countenance of the more impetuous Catholic clergyman; for Hussey Burgh's was one of those noble natures whose sympathies are ever prone to side with the weaker, however his convictions might be opposed to their cause. "How duly," he continued, with stinging satire, "we vessels of election must appreciate the high grace that endow us with immunity from all sin, or at least privileging us to the enjoyment of every sense and passion without question of responsibility, empowers us, whip in hand, to sit like gods on Olympus, to judge and scourge the delinquencies of mortals. Let us drink long life to Jupiter and the parson!"

Few there were who, cognisant of the keen wit, caustic genius, and fearless character of Hussey Burgh, cared to

encounter him in conflict, or draw upon their heads the lightning of his thunder. So none responding, the Rev. Nathaniel sat crestfallen and writhing with the pain of the shaft that had grazed him, till Captain Erskine said, curtly :

"I agree with Lamb. There is nothing like stringent measures for repressing the growth of evil ; and supineness in the work of the Lord's labourers, be he churchman or statesman, incurs anathema. Don't you think so, Esmond ?" appealing to his brother officer.

Captain Esmond slowly made response : "I dislike religious enthusiasm, which runs to fanaticism as the fruit of a flower runs to seed. Nevertheless, I do maintain the necessity of quelling and curbing by every means, even to the pulling up by the root, the noxious tares of superstition and error, even as we would cleanse a garden of weeds with process as unsparing."

"Well said, young man ; well hast thou recorded thy sentiments," exclaimed Dr. Falstaff, with pompous oratorical flourish, and eyeing the speaker with apostolic benignity. "Verily the omens of the times—famine, strife, bloodshed—be grievous manifestations of the Divine wrath, chastening us for our mistaken leniency to the followers of Popery, in other words, our compromise with Lucifer and the worshippers of the woman and the idol. Oh, my friends, rouse yourselves !—rouse yourselves to holy wrath against sinners, as ye hope for the blessing of the Lord, and the inheritance of the Promised Land ; nor let the sword of Gideon slumber in its scabbard, nor be turned by the derision of scoffers"—he glanced reproachfully at Hussey Burgh—"from the extermination of the heathen."

"But there be no heathens here for us on whom to exercise our pious zeal," said Hussey Burgh. "These Irish, if you mean them, lay claim to be Christians, as we do ; nay more, they have the audacity to call their Church the parent of ours, from which, as unduteous children, we have all broke loose, to gambol our own way. If that be true, and they adduce some logic to prove it, I'd as lief not turn fratricide ; and if, on the contrary, you suggest

the conversion of the Chinese or the Hindoos—good souls!—I'm not so sure but what they may be as well off in their happy ignorance, believing in their celestial relatives, the sun and moon, or the transmigration of souls. At any rate, I have no fancy for the mission, so beg leave to decline it on any terms."

Vouchsafing no rejoinder to this most irreverent and unorthodox Protestant, the dumpling-headed bishop contemptuously turned from him to the Rev. Nathaniel Lamb, and with doleful tone, addressing that lugubrious-visaged individual, said :

"Much was I pained and grieved, my reverend friend, to learn from that excellent, promising young divine, Parson Pomfret, of the late scandalous affair at Tubber—I mean the resistance made by the irreligious and dishonest people of the neighbourhood to the collection of your tithes. I was sorry to hear, also, that the worthy proctor, Samuel Knagger, and the two soldiers, John Cody and Dick Thompson, were badly hurt in the scuffle."

"It was, indeed, very sad, your Grace," sighed the Rev. Nathaniel; and with lachrymose aspect he went on: "but only a repetition of what is going on all over the country. I couldn't expect to come off better than others; but we had the satisfaction of slaying a good many of the repro-bates, and hauling off our tithes. 'Tis a wonder," he added, looking obliquely at Father Fitzpatrick, "these priests, who have so much influence with the people, don't at least teach them to be honest."

"If we endeavoured we should not find it easy to persuade them: they were bound to render payment without having received an equivalent in some form," coldly objected Father Fitzpatrick. "The people are not fools, and they no more see the justice of indemnifying the parson for prayers in which they have no faith, or service in which they do not participate, than you would if a Mahomedan came hither, and at sword's point commanded you to yield him tribute for reading the Koran."

"Well put; a salient argument!" said the American, smiling affably upon the young priest.

"Perhaps the gentleman," interposed the discomfited

and exasperated parson, with acrimony, "can as well show by his sophistry how it is that they fail in inculcating the duty of loyalty to their servile thralls, and in their mercy spare them the punishments which we are compelled to inflict upon them as rebels, and which so much moves his splenetic wrath. Why, sir, may I ask, don't you, who hold the people in your clutch, teach them to be loyal?"

"I do not know whether I shall be so satisfactorily able to answer that question, considering the anomalous political principles and inconsistencies of those whom my evidence must impeach of the very charge from which I shall endeavour to vindicate ourselves," returned Father Fitzpatrick, with a calm serenity of manner based upon the foundation of conscious strength of position; "in proof whereof we, that is the Catholic people, the descendants of the aboriginal Celtic race—not the spurious Irish of foreign graft—we do not celebrate, on the 5th of November, the anniversary of the preservation of a Scottish king from being blown up by gunpowder by the English subjects who swore fealty to him; nor, on the 30th of January, the decapitation of his son, to whom we had given our allegiance, as the true representative of the British crown, drinking health to the successful regicide and rebel Cromwell, who dethroned him; nor, again, do we commemorate with rejoicing the battle of the Boyne, or the event which, hurling the legitimate King James from the realm, forced upon us a new dynasty, and presented a Dutch foreigner to our homage. No; all through our course has been that of consistent loyalty to the legitimate sovereign, just to-day as it would be to the crown of Hanover, did you, sirs, treading in the steps of your progenitors, take a whim to send King George to the scaffold, or an exiled outcast abroad, and place in his stead another Dutchman. Nay, my friends, be not choleric, nor discover symptoms of disapprobation at such bold suggestion: I only insinuate that what has been might be again—human nature is not infallible, and kings and thrones, we learn from history, are too often but playthings in the hands of faction. Should such ever come to pass, I only

mean to say, refuting every calumny, you would see our maligned people, even against their own temporal interest, on the side of loyalty."

"I don't believe it; they're ripe for revolt this moment," said Lord Clare, dogmatically. "What are the United Irishmen banding for? Priest, you palter with us;—but, think you, will your diplomacy hoodwink the State, and lure us to credulous trust, despite all the damning evidence we have against you?"

"From spies and informers, men hired to assassinate their fellow-men, and to trade in a country's blood!" indignantly retorted the priest.

"Yes, yes! these be our most efficient tools," smiled Lord Castlereagh. "We could do little but for our mercenaries; these are the eyes and tongues by which we see and hear what goes on in the remotest and most obscure corners. By-the-by, Carhampton, that was a good job, the capture of Lord Edward Fitzgerald? Clever man that Major Sirr, and brave;—the rebel made a desperate resistance."

"'Twill be worth a thousand pounds to Shamado, the information that led to the arrest," said Claudius Beresford. "Some fellows are born to luck!"

"Yes," said Lord Kingsborough; "and Higgins is about one of the luckiest I've known: he came into the world a scavenger's boy, and he has grubbed out of the mire a silver spoon, egad! Priest," he continued, "if the people be so peaceably and loyally disposed as you say, to what end is this great manufacture of pikes carried on through the country, whereof some cartloads, found lately concealed on a certain demesne not far from Dublin, will surely hang the proprietor, and confiscate his estate?"

"In many instances, I believe, the people make them to use as weapons of defence against the lawless soldiery who break into their houses at all hours of the night and day, and, under pretence of searching for gunpowder or rebels, offer outrage to their families," said Father Fitzpatrick:—"at least I know it has been so in my neighbourhood, and 'tis one of the miseries to which I hope to draw Lord Castlereagh's attention."

"Pooh, I can do nothing in the case: the military are not under my control," said Lord Castlereagh. "If the people will be rebellious, in a state of smothered war, as Hussey Burgh says, they must take the consequence."

"Certainly!" endorsed Dr. Falstaff, with unctuous softness of speech. "If the obdurate helots will be helots, why, let them have the stripes they covet, and every curse that falls upon the anathematised be their portion!"

"Beware of Mordecai sitting at the gate!" muttered the priest, in suppressed tone.

"What, sir, do you menace?" cried Lord Clare, scowling at the speaker.

"No, my lord, I only warn," coolly responded his opponent.

Hussey Burgh amused, shrugged his shoulders, and exclaimed: "Lord save us, if after all we should be in the wrong box. My Lord Castlereagh, for instance, Dives, and Paddy Lazarus."

"Nay, worse than Dives!" exclaimed the priest, intoning every syllable with a sonorous vibration that thrilled through every bosom; "for the Dives of to-day adds persecution to the miseries of Lazarus: he smiteth whom the Lord hath stricken, and his dogs, in lieu of licking the wounded man's sores, lacerate them with their cruel fangs. Silence a moment, I entreat, and for your own souls' sake, hearken to my words, that you may not sin without knowledge, or I fail in rendering to you the solemn words of unerring truth," continued the priest, elevating his voice, and with impressive gesture waving his hand to suppress the murmurs swelling around. "Bethink you, sirs, is there no danger, that, moved by the cries of the afflicted and the humble, their clinging faith and devotion, their patient suffering and self-sacrifice, while forgetful of Him who hath said, 'Blessed are ye, poor and persecuted,' you revile the children of the beatitude, give the lie to the divine promise, 'Great is your reward in heaven,' and arrogantly assume to yourselves the attributes of prerogative, to wreak fell passion upon your fellow-servants: bethink you, I say, that the Lord of those servants whom you beat, and buffet, and bruise may not

come upon you in his wrath, and mete unto you as you have meted unto them. Oh! beware, I charge you, one and all, that you fill not up a vial of wrath against the day of wrath, to overflow upon your own heads!"

"Enough, enough!"—"Shut up!"—"We want no homilies!"—"We know our duty well enough!"—simultaneously shouted Lords Carhampton, Kingsborough, Clare, and Claudius Beresford. Amid a storm of yells and hisses, the priest relapsed into silence, looking worn and haggard, and as though ten years were added to his life.

Jibingly Lord Castlereagh, whose manner never swerved from decorum, smiled and said: "Why, Fitz, heaven help the State if all our theologians were such philanthropists, to boot; Machiavelli himself could never have pulled it through. Pray let's discuss some topic of less sensational interest. I say, Whaley, is it true that Colandisk and his lady are not pulling amicably in harness? How's that?"

"My dear fellow, how can I tell? Such is the *on dit*;—but I'm not a whit the wiser than yourself of the cause. Hearts and diamonds have someway run foul of each other; queens rule it over knaves, till knaves grow insubordinate and act as the king of clubs, and then—why, and then, there's a row, to be sure. Ah, the mistake Guildford made was in not sticking to his first love, pretty little Alphonse Fitzpatrick."

"But he would, only for the girl's inconceivable folly in refusing to conform, and giving up a fine fortune rather than do so," said Claudius Beresford.

"Mulish, like all the Papists," said Buck Whaley; "but for all that, I venture to say, had he married the girl, he'd have soon trounced her to church;—but he got huffed, forsooth, and thought to break her heart, thinking, like an idiot, she loved him to idolatry, and forgetting the sex are as tough as cats. Egad, I fear he is now in danger of the knout himself at the hands of his amazon. What a pretty creature that sister of yours is, Esmond! I think her the greatest beauty in the world;—and I've been as far, you know, as Jerusalem—a good step you will say."

"Some think my cousin Ethel is handsomer," said Captain Esmond.

"I am not of that number; Flora is my divinity: there's not her peer in the world," said Lord Carhampton, enthusiastically.

"By-the-by, is that fellow O'Driscoll still after Lady Alicia?" demanded Lord Kingsborough.

"Not at all! I've reason to know he's paying court, or at least is in love with Alphonse Fitzpatrick," said Parson Lamb, spitefully; "only his mother won't consent to his marrying a beggar."

"*Apropos*, is it true you were once paying attention to the lady yourself?" said Hussey Burgh.

"Not I!" brusquely exclaimed the parson. "I don't say but that had she conformed, for the good of the Church, I might have been induced to accede to the aunt's wishes; but I would not myself have thought of a giddy young girl."

"You had an escape, then, of being my brother-in-law, sir," said Father Fitzpatrick, rising to take leave of a company and scene most distasteful to him. "But pray do not attach to my sister the epithet 'giddy,' which does not apply to her in any sense." The company all looked amazed.

"Nonsense!" cried Hussey Burgh. "Are you, indeed, Miss Fitzpatrick's brother?"

"I have the honour, sir."

"How odd we should never have guessed it!—and indeed you are very like her," said Hussey Burgh. "Pray don't leave us so early."

But without heeding the appeal, Father Fitzpatrick whispered to Lord Castlereagh, as he took leave: "May I see you again; will you give me any hope that my suit in favour of my poor people will meet a favourable hearing?"

"No, Fitz, I won't disappoint you. I can do nothing, I will do nothing, unless you come to me with your hands full of votes for the Union. In that case I shall be happy to see you and we will talk it over; not otherwise. Adieu! Ho, Senor Don Antonio, whither away!—You are not going yet?"

"Yes, please you, my lord," cried the American, looking at his watch. "I have an appointment I must attend. *Au revoir*, gentlemen." And with hasty *congé* he followed the retreating steps of the priest.

"Come, gentlemen, let's have music. Get your violin, Beresford; let's have a glee," cried the Chief Secretary, who was a proficient in the art divine. "Mine ear thirsts for other melody than that to which yon conceited young fellow, presuming on our college friendship and his monastic charter to lecture and fulminate anathemas, has treated us; but methinks, seeing we are made of mettle to resist the cannon and artillery of Rome, he will scarcely trouble us more to propitiate his menagerie of wild animals by stroking the monsters we would tame with whips and chains."

"I, for one, admired the pluck of his reverence to beard so many lions in our own den."

"I daresay you did," grinned Buck Whaley.

"Yes, I felt quite awed by a sense of the sublime."

"The deuce you did. Come, Erskine, give us a song, in your best style to a good chorus."

CHAPTER XXII.

THE MISSES WARBECK HIGGENBOGGAN IN TROUBLE.

"Look on the picture! deem it not o'ercharged;
There is no trait which might not be enlarged."

BYRON.

HAVING, as became worthy disciples of the Rev. Nathaniel Lamb, Sardanapalus Pomfret, Hotspur Fox, Ebenezer Godkin, and a host of Gospel zealots renowned for anti-Papal zeal, demonstrations, and denunciations, rabid and rancorous against them that carried the "mark of the beast," and sour lives overflowing with gall and wormwood,

brewed in the alembic of hearts which, wanting the ingredient of charity and self-maceration, yielded after all but counterfeit metal or base dross to the alchemist's labour, in lieu of fine gold purified from alloy—having acquitted their wounded spirits of any further interest, and disburdened their plastic conscience of any further responsibility, and summarily ejected their self-willed niece and ward from the shelter of their roof and a share of their bread, the Misses Warbeck Higgenboggan sat down in their respectability, doubly enhanced in their own eyes and those of many others by their arbitrary proceeding, and sensible of the consequence vastly augmented by the late accession to their means; nevertheless, strange to say, they did not experience that blissful serenity of peace, that inward self-gratulation which is generally supposed to be the recompense of heroic action or self-sacrifice, but quite the contrary;—a peevish feeling of discontent with themselves and the world ruffled the even tenor of existence, and embittered the flavour of every luxury with a venom for which there seemed to be no anodyne. Naturally harsh, severe, and censorious, the two ladies got on well together, so long as a third object was within reach to divert attention, and, like a lightning-conductor, draw to itself the electric bolt of the surcharged clouds; and quite smoothly, also, they maintained a character of dignity with their menials, so long as a medium of communication was at hand to telegraph their will to the underlings, criticise, order, and rebuke by their authority, and prove a safety valve, that carried off risk or menace of explosion from overboiling vessels of the nether machinery, ready full oft to burst upon their heads. But now, the lightning-conductor cashiered, the safety-valve turned out of doors, a week had not elapsed till the Misses Warbecks' sisterly relations and household order assumed another aspect—Miss Sophy and Miss Fanny, pacing silent chambers once vocal with sweet song, gay laughter, or merry chat, experienced a dreary sense of unwonted solitude; seated at table, missing the sunshiny smile and fresh beaming eye, full of irrepressible mirth and frolic, to be scolded or grumbled at, unconscious of its softening and humanising

influence upon their souls, resorted to the most natural expedient of relieving the pent-up steam by sparring with each other—a harmless amusement, if not indulged too acrimoniously or persistently; thence descending to lower level, their voices woke discordant echoes from jarring instruments, only to be soothed into tune and harmony again by skilful address, involving the surrender of much pride, and finally succumbing even in dignity, till the balance of place became finally a problem, and solved at length by menial insolence and impertinence struggling for and attaining the upper hand.

The same evening, and at about the same hour that Lord Castlereagh was entertaining his guests, Miss Warbeck Higgenboggan, phlegmatic, grim, and solitary, was seated, with her fat pug in her lap, we cannot say dreamily gazing out of her drawingroom window: she was too practical to be dreamy or imaginative, so we can only say she was looking out of her drawingroom window, thinking of something not pleasing in subject, if one might infer from the lines and wrinkles that had contracted to a frown upon her rigid brow. Presently the door opened, and the housemaid, lately promoted to the office of housekeeper and *confidante*, entered, without preface.

"Well, Betty, what do you want?" demanded Miss Warbeck, endeavouring to uphold a semblance of state and reserve with the menial it pleased her to humour, but whose forwardness sometimes plagued her.

"Please, ma'am," began Abigail, humbly, yet with feline gaze watching the effect of her words, "my time 'll be up this day fortnit, an' I coome to give warnin' I can't stay no longer."

"Why so, Betty?" cried Miss Warbeck, with an expression of discomposure that did not escape the lynx-like eye fixed upon her. "Why must you go? You answer me very well; you've now been here twelve months, and I've no fault to find with you."

"No, ma'am, I know ye haven't; long sorry I'd be to lave it in anyone's power to find fault wid me, or say black was the white of my eye; but"—she put her apron to her eyes, and began to sob and blubber—"everyone isn't a

nice lady like you, that I could live an' be happy all my life wid ; but I couldn't put up wid Miss Fanny's temper, an' comin' the mistress over me an' cook, pimpin' an' spyin' about, as is mane ways for a lady, prowlin' into the panthry, an' askin' where's the rest o' the cowlid meat, an' what wint wid the fruit an' the tarts, an' findin' fault wid the tea an' sugar an' coffee being out days too soon, an' reckonin' the bills from market an' the grocer, just as if I wor a thief that wanted to rob her, an' I wid sich a charaather for honesty ;" and Betty wrung her hands and wailed aloud in the excess of her injured feelings.

"Now, then, Betty, are you such a fool as to take on so, and leave your good place for Miss Fanny's oddities?" exclaimed Miss Warbeck, relieved to find that the cause of grievance lay not at her own door, and judiciously proceeded to solace the troubled menial. "Don't mind Miss Fanny ; she isn't your mistress, and has no right to regulate my servants ;—take the keys, and keep them ; you are only responsible to me for your conduct. Well, what more have you got to say?"

"Oh, ma'am, dear, if everyone was like you, what a good time poor sarvints 'ud have o' it, an' niver lave their places ; but whin Miss Fanny ooomes an' tells all sorts o' lies on one, how's a body to get in, as in course she'd have yer ear, an' natural ye'd believe her agin us."

"Miss Fanny has told me no lies of you, and if she did I wouldn't believe them," cried Miss Warbeck, emphatically.

"By yer lave, ma'am, she tould me this mornin' that I didn't wash the lap-dog, but only soused him in the oistern, an' let him lie on the mat to get his death o' cowlid, an' that she'd tell you, an' took to dhry him herself, by the way ;—an' I, that 'ud give my own life for yer little lap-dog, the darlint crathur, that hasn't the like o' him for beauty in the world ;—an' more than that, Miss Fanny ooomes to cook the other day, an' says : 'Martha, who had ye in the house last night, that I seen go out by the lamplight at five o'clock this morn'.' 'No one, ma'am, says Martha ; 'we was all in bed.' 'I beg yer pardon,' says Miss Fanny, 'I seen a robust man lave the house

at five o'clock, an' I heerd sounds o' voices talkin' an laughin' below at one o'clock in the night.' 'Oh, ma'am, yer ravin' or dhreamin',' says the cook; 'maybe 'twas the sweep ye seen coomin' out o' next door.' Anyhow, as I says, cook, who has fine vails to her wages, may think it worth her while to put up wid such inwestigation, but I couldn't do it no how. I couldn't get on undher the same roof wid Miss Fanny. Lawk! will I iver forget the fuss she made about her white dimidy petticoat an' ohintz mornin' gownd that must have blowd away off the line—she as good as said they was stole. No, I wouldn't stay for no consideration."

"Oh, yes, you will! I couldn't do without you, Betty; it is so essential to have an honest person about me, and a clever, thrifty woman like yourself, that knows my ways," pleaded Miss Warbeck. "Go down to the kitchen, and next quarter I'll raise you a pound."

"Thank ye, ma'am; it's yerself is the lady, an' no mistake," cried Betty, mollified by the bribe, yet not quite content. "Sure it's the hard-hearted crathur I'd be to lave ye, knowin' what a lot of riff-raff sarvints is, an' that maybe it's a thief an' a murdherer, that 'ud pisin ye in yer tae, ye'd get next. Plase, ma'am, maybe ye could advance me a lend o' a thirty shillins on my next wages, an' give me a couple of hours to run down to Grafton-street to buy a petticoat and a shawl;—I'm badly off for a dacent stitch to go to church on the Sabbath."

"To be sure I will, Betty! Fetch me my desk;—and you may have that old black silk gown of mine you seem to covet—though I don't think it's quite the thing for servants to dress in silk, and I had intended it for the charity-school mistress."

"Oh, ma'am, dear, it's a greater charity to give it to me;—an' who'd have a betther right to the cast-off clothes than yer own sarvints. Will I tell the butler to bring up tae, ma'am?"

"Yes, do."

Exit Betty, triumphant, with demure under-glance at Miss Fanny, just coming in; and as the latter, unconseious of the impending lecture, proceeded to take her accustomed

seat opposite Miss Sophy, Betty applied her ear to the key-hole, to take in the dialogue that ensued.

"I must say, Fanny," began Miss Warbeck—"pray put down that cat; don't you see it vexes pug to see her in your lap?—I wish you would not be so officious and meddling with my servants, and disturbing the peace of the house with your interference. What would become of me if that decent, honest woman Betty, who has just given me warning, were to leave me?—and to pacify her to stay I had to promise to increase her wages, and give her a black silk gown just as good as new;—I'm sure all the cold meat and tarts isn't worth it. What if she did take some?—all servants do."

"But, Sophy, it was you asked me to see after the things," said Miss Fanny; "and I can tell you it is more than a question of cold meat and tarts. The peculation I have discovered is wholesale; and I tell you Betty and Martha are robbing you most enormously in tea, sugar, butter, candles; meat disappears by the joint, chops are cut from the loin, stakes from the sirloin; a pound of bacon only comes up where two were bought; and the bills overcharged for meat, eggs, groceries, and everything. You allow so much weekly for housekeeping, but though quite sufficient it would go no way if I did not see after things."

"Oh, nonsense; it's all your own mismanagement. How did Alphonse get on?"

"Badly enough. Many a time she complained to me, and I never disregarded her complaints; hence the rogues, finding two to one against them, were restrained within some bounds; but now they seem to think the place their own that she is gone: and you, let me tell you, give them latitude by your winking at their dishonesty."

"What can I do?"

"Turn them away at once."

"Yes; nothing easier! and perhaps take in thieves or murderers, that would poison us in our tea."

"I can tell you, Sophy, the servants you have are as dishonest as any you can get in; and it's my belief that

they have company in the house at night with them that may be murderers for all we know."

"I must beg, Fanny, you won't shake my nerves by your wild imaginings. My servants, indeed, do such things!—and Betty a convert, recommended by Nathaniel Lamb, and Martha a charity-school girl, reared up in the orphanage superintended by that godly man, Hotspur Fox. Pray say no more!—you tease me; and once for all, I beg you to remember this is my house, and not to take head over my servants."

"Very well, Sophy, look after your own affairs in future, and don't ask me to housekeep for you."

"Since you make such a compliment of obliging, of course I won't. I daresay Betty will do it quite as well."

"I hope shemay;—but I've told you my mind, and don't blame me if some day you come to grief through misplaced confidence."

A loud double knock at the hall-door interrupted a colloquy that was threatening to become acrimonious; and while John proceeded to give admission to the Rev. Agamemnon Pomfret and Squire Higgins, who had, under the auspices of Parson Lamb, been introduced, and become intimate with the Misses Warbeck Higgenboggan, Betty levanted to the kitchen, where, falsifying the adage, "That two of a trade never agree," she seated herself beside the cook at a plentiful board, spread with hot mutton-chops and pickles, cold roast veal, ham, cheese, ale, and bread and butter. Delving her fork into a chop, and brandishing her knife aloft, she exclaimed, in voice of triumph, with features varying between satisfaction and malignity: "Now I've been an' done it; I've put an end to that ould mouser's kitchen walloping; an' see, if I don't get shut of her out o' the house before long, my name ain't Betty Crossbag."

"It was a good job to put her out o' the kitchen an' the panthry, howsomiver ye did it," said the cook, wiping her mouth, and drawing a hard breath after a heavy draught of ale. "But how ye'll get her out o' the house is more nor I can see. D'ye think the missus 'll give her sither a congy to plaze ye?"

"Why, look ye now, Martha," returned Betty, speaking through a mouthful of savoury viand, "except for the convenience or use they have in 'em, there ain't as much heart for one another in their busins as there's fruit in a blind nut—ye seen that the day they turned out Miss Alphonse, that was everything to 'em so long as she plazed 'em, an' was of use to 'em, an' they made anything by her. Now, I'm useful to the missus, an' she knows it, bekase, ye see, I've got to the inside o' her, and know all her whims an' oddities, an' how to humour 'em, an' I humbug her, 'till I'm ready to dhrop wid laughin' in my sleeve to see how the poor vain, consaited crither, like a born idiot, swallys like honey every word thim ignorint Irish crithers calls blarney an' palaver; an' to see her lookin' so big, an' givin' herself the airs she does, houldin' her head over everyone. Howandiver—cut me a piece o' that veal. There, not too much, lest they'd miss it, an' be sayin' we had more nor our boord wages—she'll be glad enough, if it comes to the point to know who's to stay or go, to let Miss Fanny see she's one too many in the house, an' it won't hold us all; 'tain't no such hard matther to get up complaints, or pick a quarrel;—an' you could help it, Martha, twenty ways;—an' thin, whin she wouldn't stand it any longer, an' takes herself off, we'd have the ould one all to ourselves, just to turn about our finger like a thread; an' see if we wouldn't have more vails then in one year than in two before;—ay, I warrant we'd soon put up enough, you to fix John in the porter-house line, as he hankers for, an' I'd be able to plaze myself wid the man o' my own choice. Why, it's ladies an' gentlemen yet we might be as well as the best of 'em, an' we only set smart about it, an' not be losin' our time gatherin' pence whin we might be makin' a haul on pounds."

"Maybe if Miss Fanny was gone she'd get a companion, an' thim's the divil," suggested Martha, whose spirit was not equal to that of her enterprising comrade.

"Let her thry it!" contemptuously retorted Betty, winking one eye. "I warrant ye afther a fit of rheumatics, caught in a bed such as I'd air, let alone twenty other ways of making the place disagreeable to 'em both, the two id be

glad to part company. I remember onced a place I was in wid a lady the daughther died, an' a poor, pale-faced, quiet thing—a poor relation she was, I believe—came to stay wid her as companion. Well, my dear, that didn't answer Eliza Jones—that was my fellow-servant—an' was afeard the young lady would put her nose out o' joint wid the missus; so she sprinkled the sheets an' bed well wid wather afther the lady makin' such a fuss to see 'em well-aired, an' had her two months in the doothor's hands wid rheumatic faver, an' whin she was well enough to be up an' go about, she got a skeleton key that opened the panthry, an' used to help herself to the wine, an' tea an' sugar, an' viduals of all sorts, an' then boil her egg hard, an' do her chop raw, an' if she said a word, or complain to the ould lady, there was no plazin' her, till, what between that an' the expense o' the housekeepin', she was so worrited, she was glad to send her home to her people, and Eliza Jones had it all her own way, till she robbed the missus of a hundred pound one day, an' run off wid a soldier;—so I'd know how to settle a companion."

Thus schemed and chatted those adroit knaves, yclept domestic servants, over their evening repast, while in the drawingroom Squire Higgins made himself entertaining to Miss Fanny by giving exciting details of a shocking burglary and murder committed the night before in the city, and Miss Sophy relieved her aggrieved sensibilities in bemoaning to the Rev. Agamemnon all the trouble she had to endure on the score of imprudent Fanny's collision with the servants, and causing thereby such serious breach of harmony that the offended menials, at least Betty, the most valued of them, had just a while ago given warning, and had to be mollified by concessions, increase of wages, a silk gown, &c. &c., to which the reverend auditor replied, in high-flown phrase:

"Quite right you are, my dear madam, a faithful servant is more precious than silver or gold, and to be retained at any cost or sacrifice; moreover, it is incumbent upon us to guard these brands snatched from the burning from relapsing into the errors of popery;—the priests, like spiders in a cobweb, lie in wait for souls, and if we cast off

these hapless wretches, what else is before them but Babylon and the mystery of iniquity?"

"But that's all mighty fine talk, parson," cried Miss Fanny, who, having overheard the colloquy, in which she felt more interested than the burglary, suspended her attention a moment, to give her matter-of-fact opinion on the other subject; "if you, my good young friend, went down of a morning to your storeroom and found the tea-caddy you had filled the day before half empty, and the lump sugar abstracted by the pound, and the wine and spirits watered, and the cheese, eggs, meat, butter, preserves, and fruit all disappearing by halves, I'd like to know what you or any other housekeeper would say about it."

"'Tis very hard, Miss Fanny, I own, but admonish the offenders," mildly responded the gentle divine; remind them of the commandment, 'Thou shalt not steal.'"

"Fiddlestick!" ejaculated Miss Fanny, with energy; and stuttering and stammering in the volubility of declamation, she continued: "You parsons are so pious, merciful, and lenient to vice, I wonder you let the magistrates send any culprits to jail, where I'm right sure ours ought to be, and where they should be, had I a voice in it. I declare, I think them as bad and wicked as any Papist, that is—" she corrected herself—"priest-ridden, Jesuitical Papists, for there are a few, I daresay, only Papists in name and out of obstinacy, like our niece, Alphonse Fitzpatrick, who, though nominally a Papist, had none of the dark craft of the sect, but was, I'm bound to admit, very superstitious. Ah, she was a great loss to us; somehow she had a knack of managing these servants; it was a great sacrifice our parting her."

"Right you were, my dear madam," responded the parson, authoritatively. "For is it not written, 'If thy right eye scandalise thee, thou shalt pluck it out and cast it from thee?' I am happy to witness such demonstration of zeal in the disciples of our Church; most edifying is the righteous wrath of the godly, and admirable, when quoting the example of Brutus, it smiteth them of its own household with impartial rod." Miss Fanny made no rejoinder, mystified between the paradox of mild admonition to

glaring offenders of no kith or kin, and righteous wrath to them of one's own household, not obviously guilty of any specific crime, she collapsed in silence, while Miss Sophy filled out the coffee, and the Rev. Agamemnon helped himself to a toasted muffin, and the Sham Squire vigorously scratched his head, in momentary oblivion of his surroundings, and aspirated between his teeth :

"Hiffh, piffh! jolly dogs! How'd the world spin but for knaves that know how to peg the top? We might all go to bed an' snore; there'd be no such thing as making a crop out of it. Hang the saints an' bless the sinners, say I—only I don't believe there ain't many saints, an' them that gets hanged has messed their business, an' been uncommon fools, say I, like Lord Edward, that must needs run to burrow under the very noses and in the very kennel of the hounds. Lucky for me; piffh!"

"Will you take tea or coffee, Mr. Higgins?" demanded Miss Warbeck, eyeing, not amiably, that odious, low-born, forward fellow, introduced by Parson Lamb, and pawned upon her as a relation to make much of and cherish.

"Keek and tea, the ladies delectable dissipation, my dear. Give me the stingo that warms the heart of the great Mogul, aromatic Mocha," cried the Squire, rubbing his hands complacently.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE WHEEL OF FORTUNE—A NEW VERSION OF CINDERELLA.

"Thou canst number
In thy long line of glorious ancestry,
Men, the bright offering of whose blood hath made
The ground it bathed e'en as an altar, whence
High thoughts shall rise for ever.
Bore they not midst flame and sword, their witness of
The cross, with its victorious inspiration girt,
As with a conqueror's robe."

Siege of Valentia.—HERMANS.

THE course of life which so long run upon smooth wheels had at length arrived at the turning-point of ruts and obstructions, over which they jolted uneasily along, did not discover indications of improvement in favour of the

Misses Warbeck Higgenboggan, mutually dissatisfied with the world at large, and themselves and each other in particular. They sat in moody silence apart in their drawingroom, the morning after the evening of our preceding narrative, one poring over a great Bible lying open on the table before her, from whose pages she appeared to derive about as much comfort as one who had just been the recipient of a letter containing bad news, while the other, hard and grim, bent over an escritoire, was immersed in the pastime, more practical than poetic, of making up accounts. The occupation of each was interrupted by a loud clatter of horses' hoofs, and the sound of a carriage, suddenly arrested in swift career, and drawn up before their door.

"Who can this be, Fanny; surely no visitor before one o'clock?" exclaimed Miss Warbeck, with unwonted excitement, looking towards the window, but Miss Fanny, too occupied with more serious matter to be curious on the subject, made stiff response:

"I'm sure I don't know; all I know is, Sophy, that I've been robbed quite lately in this house of twenty pounds.—No!—shut your lips; I never lost it;—I'm not so careless of my money or my keys. My trunk has been opened somehow, and the gold abstracted from a box; and in the housekeeping-book here I find entries I never, I am sure, made, and an enormous increase of expenditure I know not how to account for, save in the explanation that we are fearfully robbed by servants and tradesmen in collusion."

A retort more acrimonious than courteous was on the lips of Miss Warbeck, when the door was thrown open, and a fine-looking man of grave deportment, and verging upon the sear and yellow leaf of age, entered, announced by John as Don Antonio de San Luis. The ladies rose and courtesied with formal ceremony, glancing the while with minute attention at the equipment and personal outfit of the stranger, which was neither modish or costly enough to claim obeisance, nor indifferent enough to inspire disrespect. His habiliments were those of a gentleman, decidedly, yet the gloss and lustre of newness was wanting to their embellishment; a crease and wrinkle here and *there* showed tokens of their advancing decay, and a

threadbare look, which, had they been worn by one of less imposing presence, had expressed poverty, but which upon him might readily denote the careless indifference of a man too weighted with affluence, or too lofty of mind to bend to the minor details of foppery or fashion. Simply dignified, calmly self-possessed, he addressed the occupants of the saloon, over which his eyes a moment wandered with superficial observation that merely took in its general aspect: "I believe I have the honour to address the Misses Warbeck Higgenboggan?"—The ladies made a token of assent.—He resumed, "I have been informed by my friend, the South American Consul, that a young lady named Alphonsa Fitzpatrick, closely related to you, has been your ward, and resides under your care."

The Misses Warbecks' bosoms inflated with sudden emotion, and by a coincidence, perhaps not strange, they each secretly jumped to the same conclusion. This Don Antonio must be a friend of our brother Jeremiah's, and come about the will. Instantly thawing the ice of reserve in profuse civilities, they vied with each other in overwhelming the visitor: one shook him warmly by the hand, another pulled over an arm-chair. Miss Fanny rung for wine, while Miss Sophy entreating him to be seated, launched out with fluency:

"You are quite rightly informed, Don Antonio: the girl in question, my niece, has lived with me and her Aunt Fanny these several years. In fact, from her childhood I've been a mother to her: fed, clothed, educated, accomplished her, till I can safely say no girl could compete with her for finish. It is true my dear brother Jeremiah allowed most generously for her education; but ten times what he gave never could have indemnified me for all the trouble I took with her, and all the anxiety she caused me; for she was no babe of grace to rear; her mother, our half-sister, I regret to say, being a Papist, and her father of the same creed, she inherited all the stubborn, wilful, ingrate spirit of her godless parents. Well, I believe you know the sequel. When her uncle, our dear brother, died, and at our suggestion, left her a princely fortune, on the condition of renouncing the errors of Popery, and

shelter of our house in dudgeon t—
obstinacy, rendered herself an outcast,
to save her from the degradation of th
a good young woman, whom we patro
qualities, to give her an asylum in th
conducts with so much credit—Miss I
green ;—I daresay you may have he
person ?”

Don Antonio, who had sat all this
pose, with eyes rivetted upon the spea
contracted, as one pained by such a r
and spirit hardened against such a yo
answer, in a low tone :

“ Yes, I daresay ;—but tell me,
lady a brother ?”

“ A brother !” cried Miss Fanny, b
Sophy, who showed a disposition to d
leave her a cypher in the background
priest, who also offended his uncle, q
ran away from college, and lost there
We look upon him as the author and
unfortunate perversity ; and though
house, they used to meet and correspo
gether they will go to destruction.”

“ Can you tell me, madam, whe

exchanged startled glances—"but I was intercepted by Hussey Burgh, following to ask me to dine with him to-day, and when I gained the street I found no trace of him."

"Oh, that could not have been Alphonse's brother, the priest; he is not in such society; it gives him enough to do to keep body and soul together;—nay, at times, we hear, he is absolutely starving, and in black want at all periods," said both incredulous ladies, with supercilious smile at the ignorant stranger. "Priests, moreover, are not invited into society, with the exception, perhaps, for political reasons, on odd occasion a Popish prelate may, such as Troy or Moylan."

"Poor fellow!" soliloquised Don Antonio, with benign pathos. "Oh, yes, he was Alphonse's brother;—but I shall find out his address from her."

"Then you mean to call on Miss Fitzpatrick?" said Miss Warbeck, with *hauteur*. "I do not think you will be admitted to see her, since the Misses Hodgens have orders without our permission to forbid it. If you have any business with her we shall be happy to transact it for you."

"I thank you, madam," returned Don Antonio, as loftily he rose to depart. "My business with Miss Fitzpatrick is personal, and, being her mother's uncle, I am sufficiently provided with *carte blanche* to authorise me to see my grandniece at pleasure."

The ladies recoiled, aghast and confounded. "Her mother's uncle!" cried Miss Warbeck. "Her mother's uncle!" reverberated Miss Fanny.

"Yes, madam!" coldly answered the visitor. "My name is Anthony MacMahon. When a young lad I went abroad to seek in paths of industry the means of livelihood and fortune denied me in my native land. Successful in my enterprise beyond my most sanguine hopes, and known in my new abode of the western hemisphere as Don Antonio de San Luis, I have returned to gratify a home-sick yearning of years, to gaze for the last time upon the land of my birth, to embrace my parted kindred, to aid such as may need it, and to offer a happy and wealthy home to

the children of the beloved sister whose grave was all that remained of her to greet my longing eyes, having no heirs of my deceased wife, now in existence, to make them the inheritors and partners of my cumbersome wealth, which I shall so convey that they shall run no risk of forfeiting it on score of creed or nationality. I am glad, heartily glad, to find that these outcast children are in distress so dire, for the pleasure it will afford me to relieve it, and the hope it inspires of attaching their affection as a benefactor; for I own I have been pleased, greatly pleased, and proudly gratified with the bearing of my nephew last night at our dinner party, though I must confess his coat was none of the best. Adieu, madam;—Stephen's-green, you say, is where the Misses Hodgens reside? I shall at once proceed thither." With a stately bow, he closed the door, leaving the Misses Warbeck so confounded that they had not presence of mind to ring the bell for the butler to open the hall-door.

Heart-sore, brain-sick, weary of unremitting toil and drudgery, the gnawing of the canker-worm of disappointed love and trust, unmedicated by tender sympathy, or affectionate intercourse with congenial associates, severed from familiar intercourse with her surroundings, isolated in feeling, mind, and soul, more than they whom a foreign language has cut off from all interchange of speech, but who yet can interpret each other by signs, as the dumb converse by their alphabet, Alphonse Fitzpatrick day by day eked out the tenor of her existence in one unvarying routine of unrequited labour, and thankless service, aching in solitude and silence, with the hunger and thirst of a spirit famishing for human solace, and only preserved in life by the strength of the supernatural food imbibed so frequently in the life-giving sacrament of the altar. Hopeless, loveless, joyless, to-day as every other, she presided as a very forlorn muse of melody, striving patiently to initiate tyros, among whose phrenological organs that of music was altogether absent, or represented by a bone in the divine science, which would remain for ever an abstruse enigma to their obtuse faculty; or eliminate from the junction of clumsy fingers strumming ivory keys,

harmonious numbers from the vibrating chords of the tuneful instrument, unconscious that a visitor to her had just knocked at the hall-door, for since the day that O'Driscoll had conducted her to the same portal, so scrupulously was it guarded, that no future intruder had crossed its threshold, and so salutary and efficacious was the abiding impression of all the pain she had suffered upon that occasion, that though he had called again and again, and written, and deputed his mother to write and call, their visits and letters alike, she peacefully submitted to know, were withheld from her, and, apathetically resigned, she toiled on in silence. The visitor had knocked a second time, and then the pink-eyed boy, James Slevin, thrusting his dirty fingers into a tangle of straw-coloured hair, and wiping his mouth in the corner of a not over clean white apron, as he passed from his dinner to attend the summons, opened the door to a young man in a suit of shabby black, who entering, demanded to see Miss Fitzpatrick. James showed the visitor into the dingy parlour, and was proceeding on his mission, for though he knew the interdict against visitors to the governess, with the perversity of youth he longed to disobey a Missus to whose behest he was often rebellious, and nimbly he trotted up the stairs till arrested in mid-course by a shrill voice crying from the schoolroom, as he flitted along :

"Well, James, who knocked?—where are you going?"

"Please, ma'am," returned James, sheepishly fronting Miss Hodgens' brisk eyes, as she popped her head out through the door, "it's a young man wot wants to see Miss Fitzpatrick."

"That'll do; go to your kitchen," cried Miss Hodgens, emerging bodily from the schoolroom, and making quick paces for the parlour, which she entered, and without preamble accosted a young man, who bowed with a timid air of deference. "Well, sir, what's your business?"

"I am Miss Fitzpatrick's brother. I came up to town only the day before yesterday, and as my sister did not reply to my letter, I called, fearing lest she might be ill," mildly responded the young man; to which Miss Hodgens made reply :

"Miss Fitzpatrick is very well; but I don't allow anyone in my house to receive letters or gentlemen's visits. Here's your letter"—she drew a soiled and crumpled note from her pocket—"take it, and spare yourself the trouble of writing or coming again."

"But the lady is my sister," pleaded the young man with flushed brow and energetic tone. "You will surely not object to my seeing her for a few moments?"

"I tell you you can't; I don't care whether she's your sister or not. Come, sir, go; I haven't time to stop talking to you. A fine thing, truly, for people to come idling my dependents, and taking up their time; I couldn't on any account allow it."

"I must say it is very hard," said the young man, slowly and reluctantly walking to the door. He paused on the threshold, and said: "Might I then trouble you to give her a message from me, to say I——"

"I'll take no message for anyone," interrupted Miss Hodgens, opening the hall-door, just as the carriage of the South American Consul drew up, and Don Antonio alighted, and had already his hand on the knocker. Father Fitzpatrick stood aside behind Miss Hodgens, who gave a protracted stare of wonder, first at the grand equipage, and a lazy-looking figure coiled up in a cloak, lounging therein, then at the tall, upright figure that strode into the hall, and with mien of lordly condescension, presenting his card, desired to see Miss Fitzpatrick. While Miss Hodgens hesitated in perplexity what response to make, the priest issued from his backward position, and at once recognised by the new visitor, was hailed with outstretched hand and cordial exclamation:

"My dear fellow, how lucky! You escaped me yesterday, and here I unexpectedly light on you." Miss Hodgens' mind was now, as she thought, quite enlightened: this acquaintance of Priest Fitzpatrick was someone of no account, a forward fellow, who presumed upon his favour with the coachman of somebody's carriage for a seat in the same, an impostor who, under some assumed name, presenting perhaps, a stolen card, sought admission to her presence, and in collusion with the priest, for some ulterior

motive as yet not understood, required an interview with her governess. No ; she would not grant it, and sharply she replied :

"You can't see her ; she's engaged," smiling at the somewhat amazed look of the Don ; and wondering what had brought him on a similar expedition, Father Fitzpatrick followed the defiant steps of the presuming intruder as, self-invited, he entered the parlour, and turning to Miss Hodgens, repeated his demand in accents peremptory and stern for an interview with Miss Fitzpatrick.

"I've come some thousands of miles to see her," he added, to the increased amazement of Father Fitzpatrick, "and cannot be put off for some trivial academical punctilio.

"I tell you again you can't see her ; and I'll not be bullied by this extraordinary behaviour of persons in my own house," retorted Miss Hodgens, losing all self-control in rage.

"We are willing to wait your convenience, Miss Hodgens, and shall be satisfied if you will say when my sister can see us," kindly interposed Father Fitzpatrick, willing to assuage the wrath of the irritated mistress, who, so far from being placated, cried in bold defiance :

"If you wait till doomsday you shan't see her ; so you needn't expect it."

Alarmed now, the young man fixed his eyes anxiously upon the more sedate elder, who said, composedly : "Do they not allow *you* either to see your sister ? Humph ! I didn't know this lady kept a jail as well as a school. Come, madam, spare bluster, and forthwith fetch along Miss Fitzpatrick, whom I am empowered with authority to seek in any part of your house if you dare resist my application."

Upon this demand, enunciated in severe, deliberate tone, Miss Hodgens again wavered ; indignation, cooled down, gave way to the thought that perhaps this overbearing stranger was an official of Government, armed with warrant to seize Miss Fitzpatrick upon some charge, or suspicion of charge, to be investigated : women accused of complicity with the United Irishmen, and of being privy to their

secrets, were daily arrested and examined. She summoned the boy and desired him to call down Miss Fitzpatrick, observing, in rather modified manner, that if the girl had in any way rendered herself amenable to justice, far be it from her to disprove her loyalty by casting the mantle of her protection over a culprit, or shielding her in any way from the penalty of the law; that no one could more deprecate the weakness of pernicious leniency to guilt, which, in her opinion, amounted to connivance with the guilty; and in the midst of her virtuous declamation, Alphonse Fitzpatrick, pale and weary, with slow, languid step, entered the apartment. At sight of the stranger she paused, and slightly courtesied, with wistful, earnest eyes, inquisitively scanning his person; but when her glance accidentally lighted upon her brother, modestly standing in the background, a sudden, dazzling beam of pleasure, flashing brightly from within, radiated every feature, and at once transformed the inert figure and apathetic countenance into a vision of ethereal grace and beauty. With faint smile of heartfelt satisfaction, Don Antonio, gravely attentive, marked the silent, decorous greeting of spirit communing with spirit in mute but expressive language of deepest affection; then addressing himself to Alphonse, whose eyes again sought his in questioning scrutiny, he said, with benignant affability of tone and gesture: "Come hither, little lady, and let me hear from your own lips whether all the naughty accounts I have heard of you be true?"

Alphonse smiled, and continued to gaze in embarrassed silence upon the stranger, whose meditative eye appeared to be searching the very depths of her soul.

"Well, well," resumed the stranger, with ineffable sweetness, "I see you will not confess in public;—but tell me this, do you remember your grandmother?"

"I can scarcely say I do," she returned, below her breath. "I was only two years old when she died."

"I remember my grandmother very well," broke in Father Fitzpatrick, enthusiastically; "and good right I have. The dear soul was my childhood's idol; and for all that I am to-day, for anything that is in me of good,

I may thank her early precepts and maternal tuition. Ah, she was a saint!"

"Had she any brothers?" asked the stranger.

"Bless you, several brothers and sisters! Was there ever an Irish family of straitened means that had not a potentially numerous progeny?" replied Father Fitzpatrick, evidently glorying in the melancholy fact.

"Do you remember your aunts and uncles well?" demanded the prying stranger.

"Oh, well. There was Mary, and Norah, and Bridget, and Anne, all dead now, God rest their souls! and Joseph and big Antony, and Christy and little Pat," cried the priest, launching freely out on the gushing tide of home recollections. "All scattered now over the world; dear, dear, dear!"

"A wild lot of chaps, I daresay," said the stranger.

"No; they were not wilder, I think, than young men usually are; except Antony, who was my favourite, a great hulking fellow, who was for ever getting into rows and broils and mischief in every form," smiled the priest, with sad and tender reminiscence. "The others were high-spirited youths who, unable to push their fortunes at home, went abroad, and have not since been heard of."

"And Antony, the reprobate, what became of him; was he transported?"

"Poor fellow, no! Though the black sheep and plague of the family, he was the favourite of all. He got into trouble taking some poor man's part in a quarrel with bailiffs about tithes, was put into prison, and when liberated, in a fit of disgust he, too, followed the rest. From that day my grandmother pined away, and some vague rumour later on, that he had been lost at sea, caused, I think, her death; for, next to her deceased husband and her children, that twin brother was more to her than all the world."

The stranger's eyes grew dim, yet, displaying a row of teeth in a broad smile, he said: "Well, I can tell you some news of your grand-uncle Antony. The whale that swallowed Jonas, having died long ago, did not swallow him; he'll be glad to see you, for he's as poor as Job, and any pecuniary

aid you can afford him will be thankfully received. So what message shall I take him?"

"If you will allow me I will be my own messenger and go with you to my grand-uncle," eagerly exclaimed Father Fitzpatrick. "Where does he live? I yearn to see once more the dear old fellow."

"Come along, then;—and what do you say, young lady?" to Alphonse, who diffidently made answer:

"I should be very glad to go with you and Patrick to see my grand-uncle; but I fear Miss Hodgens may not be pleased to let me."

"Tut-tut! Miss Hodgens won't object, she is so kind. Put on your bonnet, child."

"I beg your pardon, sir, but I will object," screamed Miss Hodgens, no longer in awe of official functionary or influential visitor. "Go up to your school, Miss Fitzpatrick; Lady Alicia will be here immediately for her music lesson; and I'm astonished at the cool impudence of your brother, the priest, and this other individual, to intrude into my parlour, and take up my time and yours with such idle gossip, as if I had nothing to do but stand and listen to talk of people I know nothing about, and forsooth I must be bullied to fetching you to help to entertain such company; all I can say is, if it happen again, out of this you go, my lady, and find shelter somewhere else."

Alphonse, dismayed, abashed, and pained, turned in consternation to the door, while the priest, equally distressed, cast a timid, deprecating glance at the irascible mistress, venting her splenetic humour and exercising her petty authority with tyrannical force upon its helpless and unresisting object.

At this juncture the stranger, rising, advanced, and intercepted Alphonse. Taking her cold and trembling hand in his he said, looking full at Miss Hodgens: "It shall not happen again, madam; the young lady accompanies me; pray fetch her apparel?"

"And who, in the name of the Lord, may you be, sir, that presumes to behave in this manner in my house?" vociferated Miss Hodgens, every feature swelling and glowing with rage.

"You have my card, madam," said Don Antonio, concisely. "If you desire to know more, I am Miss Fitzpatrick's grand-uncle."

"The pauper!" sneered Miss Hodgens. She turned to the astounded Alphonse: "If you choose to go and earn and help to support this man on what wages you may get, of course I've nothing to say against it; but first you must fulfil your engagement to me for the food and shelter I bestowed upon you when, turned out of your aunt's house, you besought an asylum here."

"Here, Patrick, hold my hat and gloves!" exclaimed Don Antonio, thrusting those articles into the hands of the gasping and staring young man, while impetuously flinging open his overcoat he extracted from a recess in his bosom a large Morocco pocket-book, fastened with golden clasps, and taking therefrom a roll of bank notes he handed it to Alphonse. "Now, my dear, pray satisfy whatsoever obligation in which you may stand indebted to this lady"—he laid a stress upon the title that conveyed a sense of irony—"after which get on your things and say good-bye to an establishment to which you will have no further need to return."

Alphonse, unable to move or speak from emotion and overwhelming astonishment, stood passively, as one mystified, looking at all in turn. Perceiving her helpless bewilderment, her brother advanced, took the roll of notes out of her hand, and addressing Miss Hodgens, now utterly collapsed, said gently, but firmly: "How much do you demand, Miss Hodgens, in requital of your claim upon my sister?"

"I don't know;—I can't say;—I'm sure 'tisn't money. 'Tis very ungrateful;—I should have got timely notice;—I was quite unprepared for this emergency. It will be the loss of a hundred pounds to me," stammered Miss Hodgens, incoherently, and with excited, flurried manner, nothing toned down by hearing Lady Alicia Luttrell's voice just entering the hall.

"Give the lady a hundred pounds in liquidation of her claim, and let us be going," impatiently cried Don Antonio, throwing open the door. He stood still, and bowed to

Lady Alicia on the threshold ; and the latter, scornfully acknowledging the stranger's courtesy by a contemptuous toss of her head, exclaimed testily :

"Please don't delay my lesson, Miss Fitzpatrick ; I am in haste for the promenade."

Don Antonio's bass notes answered the shrill treble : "Here, boy, call to the maid for Miss Fitzpatrick's bonnet and mantilla. Go on, Patrick, to the carriage, whither we shall quickly follow you. My friend the consul must be out of patience ; I owe him many apologies for delaying so long. There, Alphonse, that will do, child ; never mind fixing bows or ribbons just now ; when we get home you can make your toilet and refit to your satisfaction." Allowing not one moment for leave-taking or explanation, Don Antonio hastened the still completely abstracted girl along, handed her into the carriage, entered himself, closed the door with a bang, gave order to the footman, and the equipage rolled away, pursued by the gaping eyes of Miss Hodgens, Lady Alicia, the menials, and many more of the establishment, whom swift tidings had congregated in haste to witness the transformation scene, and the poor governess, the homeless outcast, like another Cinderella borne away in flying chariot to resume once more her station among the magnates of the court.

CHAPTER XXIV.

GUILDFORD COLANDISK FINDS HIS MATRIMONIAL SPECULATION
A FAILURE—HIS WIFE LAMENTS SHE HAS NOT MADE A
HOLY ALLIANCE—LADY ALICIA LUTTRELL SYMPATHISES
WITH EACH, AND COMFORTS BOTH.

“Put both their wits and worth together,
They scarcely would outweigh a feather.”

DISAPPOINTED of her music lesson, but with sense of disappointment in matter far less trivial clouding her brow, and the barbed thorn of jealous envy lacerating and festering in her heart, Lady Alicia left Miss Hodgens, not for the promenade, which she was no longer in a frame of mind to enjoy, but for her own mansion, to brood and ruminate in secret over the terrible evil that had befallen her, in the prosperity of Alphonse Fitzpatrick, yesterday a despised, abject dependent, to-day elevated to a position of social equality which, challenging acknowledgment, also, even as the oak draws the lightning to rend its stately form, evoked the subtle venom of deadliest hatred to wreak its fell malignity upon the offending obstacle to her peace, direly conscious that her unwearied blandishments had up to the present failed to captivate O'Driscoll, whose very studied care to avoid her, supreme indifference to her beguiling flattery, and coldly courteous urbanity of demeanour at all times, had invested him in her eyes with a value and a consequence that inspired her with impassioned ardour in pursuit of her cherished object, and a delirious resolution to attain it by any means. How desperate now must be the contest for the prize, when one, whom she had too much reason to fear had still left a prepossessing impression upon his mind, arrayed anew for the strife, should re-enter the lists with her. Tortured, exasperated, maddened, at

remotest prospect of her rival's conquest, Shylock in all the vindictive hatred of his Christian adversary never more cruelly yearned for the pound of flesh, the bond of death, than did she, Lady Alicia, thirst for one draught of the heart's blood of this Popish Irish girl, her bane and torment. While she lounged on a silken divan in the saloon, chafing nerve and pulse into a fever, and empoisoning the tide of life, with acrid humour fermenting it into gall, the door opened, and her familiar, Susan Gubbins, came in.

"What ails my precious Alicia, my dearest friend; is it a headache? I'll run for the aromatic *vinaigre*, the otter of rose, or *sal volatile*," cried with *empressment* the humble parasite, who retained her place in the sunshine of favour by ministering to the pleasure of her patrons or by serving their need—one of those appendages tacked to wealth and station, who waiving salaried stipend, are privileged to hold the minor place of humble friends, and pick up what crumbs may drop from the capricious bounty of their entertainer as guerdon sufficient for service graciously acknowledged as obsequiously rendered, and of which constant adulation and perennial endeavour to keep the divinity in good-humour and pleased is the most essential.

"Psha!—no; let it alone. Can't you stay quiet a moment; you are always for a run somewhere; I never saw such a one as you are, Susan; enough to fidget one to death," petulantly responded Miss Gubbins' divinity, at this moment fuming in a state of temper the satellite perceived it would task her most adroit skill to anneal into a more flexible condition. "Come in and shut the door, and don't look so bothered, as these vulgar Irish say. Did you hear the news about Alphonse Fitzpatrick, and if you did not, guess it?"

Now, Miss Gubbins, for the life of her, wouldn't own she did not hear the news about anyone or anything, else she'd have been reviled, as old experience told her, as a bore, a stupid dunce, and by other epithets equally terse and explanatory; so to sustain the reputation she ambitioned of omniscience and postal celerity of despatch, she briskly made answer: "Just what I always knew would be the case, the aunts have taken her back."

"Well, you see you are not always an oracle, Gub," testily exclaimed Lady Alicia, not sorry, in her present un-amiable mood, to flout her friend, and disparage her vaunted ability. "I daresay they'll be sorry enough now they didn't: the poor fag has become all of a sudden an heiress, with no end of wealth to her purse."

"You don't say so?"

"Yes, I do say so; I saw it with my own eyes. That seedy old Lear we met with the South American Consul the other day at Lady Moira's turns out to be a Nabob and her granduncle. He handed Miss Hodgens a present of a hundred pound bank-note for her charity to his grand-niece: she told me so herself, and showed it to me. All the while I thought if he but knew how abominably she treated the girl he'd have been more chary of his liberality. At any rate, I suppose Miss —— will now turn out from head to foot a blaze of diamonds."

"Yes, and make a fool of herself by marrying some fortune-hunting spendthrift, like Caroline Damer;—they all do it. What a fool Guildford Colandisk was, after all! What will he say now? He married for money into a family that well know how to hold it; and little of it they give him."

"You forget, dear," said Lady Alicia, upon whose ruffled soul the speech of her friend had poured not a solitary drop of oil to soothe its heaving, but bathed it in a delicious shower of balm, "you forget that Guildford got two thousand guineas on his wedding-day, for his sole use and pleasure, independently of a nice yearly income."

"And what was two thousand guineas to a profligate such as Guildford? He hadn't one shilling of it by that day week;—and he and his wife quarrel like cat and dog."

"I knew they would. Caroline always had a bad temper," said Lady Alicia, pleasantly.

"And did not ameliorate it by too much indulgence in stimulants," observed Miss Gubbins. "Guildford made a great mistake in marrying her. A man with his extravagant propensities should have looked for a wife with immense fortune at his own disposal. Such a gambler as he

is, too! Alphonse Fitzpatrick was just the one for him. He has made a great miss!"

"Poor fellow! I'm very sorry for him," murmured Lady Alicia, with that peculiar smile of satisfaction that plays upon the lips of those whose principal happiness is mainly derived from the misfortune of others; then, as another idea germinated in her fertile mind, an indescribable glittering light that was absolutely terrific shot into her eye, and quickly rising, she said: "Come, get on your bonnet, Sue; I'll go and pay a morning visit to the Colandisks, and break the news to them. Poor things! they'll be glad of a little friendly sympathy;—and it is a duty to comfort those that are in trouble. Make haste! I don't know what's come over me; I feel so upset by this event, and put out of my usual composure. I feel all like yourself, dear, on the fidgets, which is not becoming to a lady. I must take a glass of wine, and cool down, before I can venture out."

While the ladies dress, take their glass of wine, and cool down, the newly-wedded pair marked out for their impending visit, seated in the honeymoon bower of their residence in Gloucester-street, and not many days returned from their brief wedding-trip to Enniskerry—the golden gates of Paris and London, and the high-roads leading thereto were in those days of slow progress not so open to hymeneal trains as in our more favoured time—were holding earnest colloquy; but, to judge by unguarded words and unwary sentences, that full often transgressing limited boundaries were wafted beyond closed portals to the ears of grinning menials and vagrant passers to and fro, not in the amorous endearments of connubial affection were those stray phrases and syllables couched, which sounded much more like a vulgar wrangle between Mars and Bellona, but louder, clearer, and more distinctly swelled the duel harangue, when to the masculine elocution, delivered with emphasis:

"By Jove, I'm over head and ears in debt; and if the old curmudgeon, your father, doesn't come down handsome, there's no use mincing the matter, Carry, I must bolt or go to prison. There now, you have the pith of it,"

a feminine echo reverberated: "Then bolt or go to prison. My father, I know well, won't give another farthing, Guildford; so it's no use to worry him or me with bluster."

"And how, in the name of Pluto, woman, does the old Cræsus suppose I'm to keep up a wife and establishment in respectability if he don't allow the means for it?" vociferated the bass, in which there was no music.

"Ha! ha! ha! 'tis the wife and establishment that keep you up in respectability: 'tis my money, sir, you are living upon, and which I enjoyed before ever I saw you, and will enjoy to the end, in spite of your extravagance," shrilled the treble, in tone of jarring discord, destitute of melody. Then followed an hysterical burst of reproach, interluded with sobs: "You never loved me, Guildford" (sob); "you never cared for me; 'twas for my money you married me. Day after day, and night after night, you spend away from me" (sob, sob) "with your dissolute companions, and at the gaming-table. You took my jewels to pay your gambling debts" (sob); "then you borrowed whatever ready money I had, while you grumbled at my keeping a maid, and refused to let me have a box at the theatre, and found fault with my milliner's bill, and other necessary expenses" (sob, sob, sob) "while there's no end to all the duns pressing for your own debts, and to the lengths you go for your own nasty self-indulgence."

"Go on, madam; let me hear the rest of your eloquent invective; or have you exhausted your fluent vocabulary? But I might expect it; for the d——d ass I made of myself in marrying into a vulgar plebeian family, that never could appreciate the advantage of a union with aristocracy, and in a spirit of penurious parsimony would degrade their connection to the gutter," retaliated the injured youth, with the pathetic peroration, "It was a confounded mistake!"

In high contralto, running up the gamut, and sustaining the vocal duet with energy, madam made passionate response: "It was, indeed, a sore mistake; but on my side, not on yours, Guildford; I that had no end of eligible suitors—

lords and gentlemen of wealth and character—and that was besought in holy alliance by that sweet young fellow, Epiminandos Pomfret, and that refused the proffered hand of that godly man, Nathaniel Lamb, to go and throw myself away upon a beggar and a spendthrift” (sob, sob, sob).

In the interlude of the temporary subsidence of the wordy war, a carriage was heard rattling up to the street door; then a thundering coachman’s knock waked the startled echo from basement to garret, and, choking down the choleric explosion of his wrath, and “coining her cheek to smiles,” the wedded couple, adjusting their ruffled plumage, prepared to receive the visitors, who were speedily ushered in by the tall lacquey.

With every demonstration of extreme affection, Lady Alicia and Mrs. Colandisk flew into each other’s arms, and enthusiastically embraced, while Guildford and Miss Gubbins shook hands with friendly warmth. Then ensued on all sides an interchange of compliment, couched in stereotyped phrase, by fashion approved as genuine tribute rendered in good faith by sincerity, but which a skilful critic would define as mere verbiage, the shallowest *simulacrum* of the *bonâ fide* affectation by which the world expresses its hollow interest in its votaries. At length, all being seated and general topics entered upon, Lady Alicia hastened to ease her burdened bosom, brimming over with the news she was so eager to disclose, and, having offered her final congratulations to the discomfited Guildford, she said:

“By-the-by, dear friends, I have something wonderful to tell you. You remember that spindle of a girl, Alphonse Fitzpatrick?”

“Yes; what about her?” demanded Colandisk, with a gesture of awakened interest that did not escape the vigilant eyes of wife and visitors.

Softly smiling, Lady Alicia made answer: “Well, it seems Fortune, in a frolicsome fit, has made her an heiress. Yes, indeed; I am quite serious; and the news is authentic, since I myself have been witness to it; and a grand-uncle, instead of an uncle, is this time the prince of the fairy tale.

It seems, being of the girl's own creed, a Papist, he took huff at the poor thing being so badly treated by her Protestant relatives; and to manifest his displeasure, and indemnify her for the loss of her Uncle Jeremiah's fortune, he makes her the inheritrix of his own wealth, which is, I hear, enormous. So we shall have Cinderella once again queen-ing it among us—ha, ha, ha!—to be sure, what a reverse for her, poor creature! *Apropos*, Guildford, take care you don't lose your heart a second time to the enchantress. Carry, dear, keep a good watch over him, for I can tell you she's an insidious elf, and was, and is still, I know, infatuated about him;—and I don't know but that they might have been very well suited, notwithstanding Guildford, under the circumstance, did better. Now, dear, don't look cross and uppish; you know of old 'tis my unfortunate weakness to speak the truth and say what comes uppermost in my mind. Nor should you be angry with Guildford; for we all have our first-loves, which, if not adversely thwarted, we might have sped with happily. Don't I remember, not so long since, the pretty little flirtations between you and handsome Epiminandos Pomfret, who still, poor dear! the slave of a fatal passion, vows he will never marry, and die young? Alas! what a thing this love is! How happy they who are exempt from the misery of disappointed affection!"

"Heigh ho!" yawned Guildford Colandisk, recovered from the shock of consternation that had well-nigh prostrated him at the tidings of Alphonse's good-luck; and quite restored by Lady Alicia's assurance that she still thought of him with love, it enhanced his value in his own eyes to think himself endowed with such power of fascination, and, flattered in his vanity by her devotion, without counting the cost or anticipating obstruction, he felt he loved her more than ever.

"Very true," sighed Mrs. Colandisk, gratified to think she still had it in her power to enthrall one heart and fire another with jealous rage. "I had always an esteem for young Pomfret, and, had fate so willed, I daresay we should have been well matched. I'm sorry the poor fellow takes it so to heart; but what can't be cured must be en-

dured. But," she added, piqued with vexation against Lady Alicia for her stupid blunder, intimating to her husband that his jilted *fiancée* still deplored his inconstancy to her, and bemoaned his transferred vows, thereby weakening, to say the least, her influence over his very plastic mind, "my dear, you are quite mistaken about Alphonse Fitzpatrick. It is quite true that Guildford had paid her some attention, and——"

"They were absolutely engaged," abruptly chimed in Miss Gubbins.

"Well, yes, such was the *on dit*; yet I can tell you for certain she liked O'Driscoll, and he made no secret of his devotion to her; but the girl, at that time a supposed heiress, was ambitious, or her friends were, of wealth and station, neither of which had Maurice. Besides, she was a Papist, and he a Protestant; so on no point would such a union have been possible. Nevertheless, they are positively attached to each other."

"Nonsense! nonsense!" cried the irritated Alicia, with emotion. "How ridiculous you are, my dear, to believe every idle rumour as gospel, or to suppose a man of O'Driscoll's sublime nature could be pleased with a frivolous, vain, little insignificant puppet like Alphonse;" and she appealed with a pleading glance to Guildford, who, feeling challenged to say something in corroboration of her assertion, and deeming it an opportunity to give such expression to his sentiments as should make a salutary impression upon his parsimonious *cara sposa*, and the money-grudging Damer family, cried:

"You're right, faith, Lady Alicia. Alphonse never did care for anyone but me, and, cock's soul! I had no thought but of fulfilling my engagement to her—for engaged we were, beyond doubt—till that rascally Uncle Jeremiah put an interdict between us; for, as you justly observe, Alphonse, with all her attractions and virtues, wants ballast. She has no head, no more than—than a needle, and, like all such, is obstinate as a mule; so as she refused to make the concession that would put her in possession of Jerry's bank, what was a fellow in my position, to whom money is as indispensable as the staff of life, to do, but bolt out

of an engagement that would have reduced him to penury, as I consider five hundred a year only, to maintain a wife, would be—— How could we keep a house in town on it?—how could I keep a horse and groom?—how could we dress and entertain, or enjoy small social pleasures? Pish! not to be thought of! No man, I assure you, can live like a gentleman on less, if he be a married man, than three thousand a year, with occasional helps—at least, I could not; for in my bachelor days, even, I always lived up to a thousand a year to support my station. Now, I'm sorry to say that the family I have allied with do not understand this. Why should they? I cannot blame them. It is their misfortune, not their fault, if they are too immature, too young, if I may so express it, in our sphere, to appreciate the requirements of elegant affluence and luxury; and with the prestige of commonplace life, the aroma of the factory, and the hoarding habits of the shop yet clinging to him, I am not surprised that my father-in-law considers an income of two thousand a year a good subsidy, while I regard it as a pauper's dole, and protest aloud it will never do—never!”

“I think it's a very good income. Can't you retrench?” cried matter-of-fact Miss Gubbins.

“Retrench!—retrench what?” indignantly remonstrated Colandisk. “You women are all the same in money matters—no mind for calculating arithmetic. What can I retrench?—Carry must have her maid and her car, and a box at the theatre; I must have my valet, and my horse, and see a few friends now and then, and——”

“Certainly, Guildford, certainly,” exclaimed Lady Alicia, rising to take leave; “you cannot do without these common necessities of life. Old people are apt to be stingy; but you and Caroline should represent this to your father and mother. Meanwhile, take my advice, don't stint yourselves; live upon your credit; and, when a son and heir comes, depend on it, the good couple will give you a *carte blanche* on the funds in the exuberance of their dotage. Farewell!—day-day! Come see me soon; I shall be glad to hear good news!” And away sailed Lady Alicia, having comforted her friends, and to meet the due

recompense of virtuous action, by encountering O'Driscoll, whom she had not seen for some days, coming along, strange to say, in company with a priest, and so deep in *tête-a-tête*, that though her carriage stood by the pathway, he had not noticed it among others lining the street, till her voice rang shrilly in his ear:

"Maurice!—Mr. O'Driscoll, were you passing me by?"

"A thousand pardons, Lady Alicia!" apologised the young man, making a sign to his companion to walk on, that he would overtake him. "I was ——"

"Oh, you needn't explain; I saw you were so engrossed by the individual with you—he looked more like a priest than a parson—you did not observe anyone else. Why do you never come near me? It is an age since I've seen you!"

"Only three days!" smiled Maurice.

"Only three days!" reiterated the lady, with pouting lip and reproachful eye. "I'm sorry," she added, plaintively, "that I hold so slight a place in your regard, that you think of no account a space that seems to me so interminable;—and your mother, Lady O'Driscoll, too, is so reserved and distant I really fear sometimes I must have inadvertently done something dreadful to make you hate me."

"Oh, fie, Lady Alicia," said O'Driscoll; "why entertain such delusion? You know my time, as I have often explained to you, is not all my own; and my mother, who is in delicate health, is a bad visitor in general. She and I would be sorry to treat you with discourtesy."

Not much appeased by this evasive justification on the part of O'Driscoll, who, she knew quite well, had leisure sufficient to bestow his devotion at whatever shrine to which his heart inclined him, Lady Alicia continued: "Whither are you now going?—will you take a seat in the carriage, and let me have a chat with you?"

"I should with pleasure, but my friend is waiting for me."

"Oh, indeed! Well, come over this evening, will you?"

"Thanks!—if I can."

"I'll have no 'ifs,' sir; I shall expect you; I have some wonderful news to tell you. You remember that poor thing, Alphonse Fitzpatrick, whom the Misses Hodgens took in out of charity, when the horrid old aunts turned her out, and that I've been taking music lessons from out of pure compassion?"—He nodded assent.—"Well, would you believe, some rich old uncle has turned up from somewhere, and she has left Miss Hodgens to go live with him."

"Yes, I've heard it all," said Maurice, "and I am very, very glad of it."

"Bless us, how news flies! From whom did you hear it, Mr. O'Driscoll?" demanded Miss Gubbins.

"From her brother," returned he, curtly.

"That man you were with just now?" returned Lady Alicia, inquiringly, and remembering to have seen him three or four hours since at Miss Hodgens.

"The same," concisely replied Maurice.

Lady Alicia's brow for a moment expressed the chagrin of her soul; but, conscious that O'Driscoll's searching eye was upon her, she stifled the bitter passion struggling for vent, and affecting an innocent gaiety and a *nonchalance* of air she was far from feeling:

"Now, tell me seriously, dear"—ahem!—she blushed violently and tittered with nervous confusion—"do you really think Alphonse Fitzpatrick pretty?"

Smilingly he made answer: "'Tis said that every eye forms its own beauty, and with truth, I think. Now, tell me what is your opinion?"

"Oh, you clever diplomatist," laughed Lady Alicia. "Well, I'll tell you my opinion, candidly, without foregoing my desire for yours. I think her very ordinary."

"That just corresponds with what I have advanced," said O'Driscoll; "but if not insisting upon my opinion, as I may not be quite a connoisseur, or an impartial discriminator on a subject so nice, I will give you that of general consent, which admits her claim to great personal attraction."

"Psha! who cares for public opinion," persisted Lady Alicia, crossly;—"tell me what you think yourself."

"I think her beautiful!" he responded, with straightforward earnestness.

Struck by the thunderbolt of the lightning she had courted, in her anxiety to probe the heart of O'Driscoll and divine his real sentiments, Lady Alicia, stunned into silence, sat back in the carriage.

Miss Gubbins, hastening to administer her timely cordial, observed insidiously: "The girl, certainly, is a proficient in the art of setting off a very meagre physiognomy by her skill in the use of cosmetics, rouge and pearl-powder dazzling unsophisticated eyes."

Up sprung Alicia, revived, and, with a giggling simper, she exclaimed: "I ought to know that. Had you seen her at Miss Hodgens', where such things are not allowed, and she had not the means of self-embellishment, you'd have thought her face was that of an old gipsy. I daresay Guildford Colandisk made the discovery that she was not all she seemed; for I'm sure it's not merely for a pecuniary disappointment he would have jilted her. Tell me, where did you meet that brother of hers? Have you known him long? He's a dark, ugly-looking man, and she bears a great resemblance to him."

O'Driscoll, pondering in his heart, and ignorantly amazed at the perversity of jealous enmity which goaded these feminine bosoms to discharge themselves in such a flood of virulent slander to defame and asperse one whom, in happier days, he had beheld the cynosure of many an admiring eye, whose unmerited reverse had challenged general regret, whose restored fortune would be hailed with joy by all, and who for him stood alone in the world a paragon of faultless excellence, drily answered: "I met him some time heretofore, on one or two occasions accidentally; but to-day I renewed acquaintance with him where he happens to be lodging, in the same house with my friend, Hugh O'Byrne. He seems to be a good young man, and I've taken rather a fancy to him."

"Do you know he's a priest—very likely a Jesuit?" said Miss Gubbins.

"What of that?" returned Maurice.

"Take care you be not priest-ridden."

"Explain what you mean, Miss Gubbins."

"Of course, that you be not deluded, hoodwinked, trepanned over to Rome. What a Moses you are! You know well enough what I mean. I'd like to see you gulled into buying green spectacles," angrily retorted the lady.

Maurice laughed derisively. "If I'm wary enough not to be taken in for buying green spectacles, I shall be clever enough to keep outside the gates of Rome; and 'twill be time enough when I find the priest as black within as the world has painted him without to bid him good-morrow. I think I'll advise him to try some of those cosmetics his sister finds efficacious, and see if it will improve him in the eyes of the discerning public."

"Come, a truce with raillery, sir," cried Lady Alicia, whose ingenious wit had, during this brief dialogue, conceived and matured a new play of action. Playfully she proceeded: "Bring your friend the priest with you this evening. I will call myself upon Alphonse; for I intend that she and I shall be very great friends, even though I don't think her so pretty as you do. And that uncle of hers she must introduce me to. If that other colossal friend of yours, Hugh O'Byrne, will accompany you he shall be welcome. I'm not so bad as I appear, and I dare say we shall all get on famously. Adieu, *au revoir*."

She ordered the carriage forward, and as it rolled off, O'Driscoll, replacing his hat, walked on to rejoin Father Fitzpatrick, partly gratified, partly puzzled, and thinking to himself could Lady Alicia, after all, be really better than he gave her credit for, and was it prejudice only that blinded him to her hidden merit?

CHAPTER XXV.

THE BANSHEE.—THE INTERMENT AT SLIWE GADOE.

"With slow step, sad burden, and wild-uttered wail,
Maid, matron, and cottier wind up from the vale,
And loud lamentations salute the gray hill,
Where their fathers are sleeping, the silent and still!
Wild, wildly, that wail ringeth back on the air,
From the lone place of tombs, as if spirits were there;
O'er the silent, the still, and the cold they deplore,
They weep for the tearless, whose sorrows are o'er."

J. U. U.

THE bright noontide sun went down upon weeping and wailing on that May-day when the Rev. Nathaniel Lamb, the new rector, achieved his tithe victory, and bore away his blood-stained spoil from the poverty-stricken village and famishing peasantry of Tubber. Consternation spread far and wide. Pale dismay and dull despair marked every countenance, while deeper furrows, ploughed by feelings outraged to madness, and fell passions ignited and raging in many a desperate bosom, might readily be traced in some; for in many a wretched hovel a corpse was waking, or a wounded man was lying, while the loud *caoine* of sorrow wafted on the night breeze from sheiling to sheiling, blended sad echoes with the dirge of homeless wanderers in clustered groups bidding mournful farewell to the charred wrecks of mud cabins that for generations had sheltered their heads from the winter's inclement blast, and the rude walls within the sanctuary of whose enclosure, in joy and in affliction, in distress and in want, domestic sympathies had been kindly fostered, and many a virtue expanded into blooming flower. Ere parting from the beloved sod, the last of their poor earthly possessions, the sole remaining tie that had linked them to a blighted land, they turned their weary feet to swell the *tide* of pauperism flowing from countless other sources towards the metropolis, bringing in their squalid train to

the dens and purlieus of vice and profligacy to which they were crowding, fatal seed to germinate in these fertile hot-beds, and at no distant day, in just but awful retribution, to scatter broadcast on every empoisoned gale and wind of heaven the taint of pestilence, the breath of the Angel of Death, whom no bolts could bar out of garret chamber or palace hall, and whose dire visitation, irrespective of person, and defying opposition, struck down alike rich and poor, the heir of estates, and the labourer on his field. One humble homestead, and one alone, was as yet exempt from the ruin that had befallen so many others, but over which not the less surely the stroke of doom was impending ; for since the day he had interposed his manly aid to protect the dying woman from the intrusion of the false preacher, and enabled the priest to perform his ghostly functions in aid of the departing soul, Johnny Doyle and his family were marked out victims to Thug vengeance, only not instantly wreaked, because the DoYLES were not only far and near known and respected as industrious, peaceful, obliging, well-to-do people, but they enjoyed, moreover, the favour and patronage of some of the neighbouring gentry, to whom they were useful in many ways—Thady as a good carpenter, the girls as seamstresses, and his sons clever at gardening, and in many other capacities handy and expert. So, abiding the parson's opportunity to assail them with sanction of pretext, on this night of woe, in the spacious kitchen of the sheiling was assembled, after their evening repast of potatoes and milk, the whole family, with a few neighbours from a remoter locality, as yet unscathed, discussing the events of the day. The carpenter, smoking a pipe, sat upon a three-legged stool by the hearth, his wife spinning at her wheel opposite ; Johnny, with folded arms, sat cross-legged upon a corner of the deal table ; Larry, with a tattered Latin grammar in his hand, which he was not studying, hung over his mother's chair, dreamily watching the evolution of the whirring wheel ; the two elder girls were lolling at each end of the dresser ; Euphemia and Nellie sat, with their feet tucked under them, on the closed settle-bed ; while a couple of men smoked at the open case-ment, and two or three women squatted on their heels

upon the hearth round Kitty Burke, who was knitting a yarn stocking.

"Musha, ne'er a word o' lie in it, Molly, it was a bad day's work; an', mind me, yez won't see the ind o' it in a hurry," said one of these women, a coarse-featured, withal shrewd, good-countenanced matron, addressing Mrs. Doyle, in answer to some observation of the latter. "It's from bad to worse the parsons is goin' in their onchristian thratement o' the people, an' the counthry won't stan' it no longer. It's risin' fast by all I hear, an' maybe they'll find yet thim that sows the wind 'ill rape the whirlwind, *inagh!*"

"Throth, I dunno, Peggy *avourneen*," returned, in a low, plaintive accent, a mild, pale-faced young woman beside her; "I'm afeard it's the cross is upon us, an' we must lie down an' be thrampled out undher it. Welcome be the will o' God!"

"In coorse; an' we do nothin' to help ourselves," responded a stout, comely woman, resting her chin upon the palm of a broad, bony hand, "we can't expect angels 'll be sent down from heaven wid soords to fight for us, *inagh!* Now, it's my notion that if the neighbours down at Dunlavin an' round about just gave the *cead mille failthe* o' the pike ind to every sodger billeted on 'em to parsecute, an' rob, an' insult 'em, they'd have banished the varmint purty soon, an' be none the worse off nor they are, *begorra!*"

"Sorra lie in it, *begorra!*" chimed in Thady Doyle, blowing a cloud from his pipe with the brief remark.

"I dunno, Thady," returned his wife, thoughtfully "what good did the pikes do to-day?—Seven corpses wakin' below at the village. *Och hone, ferriergare!* sure 'twould melt the heart o' a stone—an' poor Mick Mooney among 'em!"

"Ay, would it, sooner nor the heart o' a parson," fiercely broke in one of the men at the casement, knocking the ashes out of his pipe. "Two out o' wan family, *och!*"

"God look down on the widdy, poor Esther, an' the fatherless childhre, this night!" groaned Kitty Burke. "I wondher what Neil More, an' Lacy, an' Donough

O'Brien is goin' to do next. Have ye any notion, Johnny?"

"Ay, have I, ma'am," said Johnny, roused from a fit of abstraction by the question; "they've gone afther O'Dwyer to the hills."

"See that now," cried the first woman who had spoken. "I tell yez ye'll hear more o' it afore long. God help the crathurs that's put to the road out o' their little sheds, an' God bless Sally Malone, that took Neil More's babby to nurse wid her own dauny one. But Donough didn't go wid 'em, shure?"

"I dhred that child 'll grow up a *natral*,* if it lives. There's lots o' childhre born foolish by *raison* o' fright an' throuble to the mother these times," soliloquised Kitty, turning the heel of her stocking. "God forgive them that's the cause o' it!"

"Badcess to 'em, an' my heavy curse on 'em, uprisin' an' downlyin' An' shure it's the *raison* we see throuble an' ruin follyin' families that was rich an' mighty in their day, an' so many that get a footin' in the land die out, stock an' crop, an' others coome in their place to fare no betther, bekase they've withered undher the scorchin' curses o' the poor, an' them they have plundered an' made desolate. Oh, ay! I'll curse 'em wid all the veins o' my heart, that neither their seed nor breed may thrive, nor know length o' days, nor honour, nor glory in the land!" returned Peggy Connor, with hearty eloquence;—"arrah, why wouldn't I?"

"Curses, like crows, go out to feed an' come home to roost, so I wouldn't curse anyone, but lave 'em to God," said Kitty.

Peggy uttered a snort of dissent: "Lave 'em to God, indeed! Maybe it's forget 'em He would, or not think they wor so bad, onless we let Him know it, *agra*."

"*Dts, dts*, God help yer wit. As if He didn't know the number of hairs on our head!" sighed Mrs. Doyle.

"Yis, in coorse, ma'am, I know; but He has such a power to do an' see afther, maybe He doesn't be mindin' every-

* A fool.

thing at onot, barrin' his attention is called to 'em, else d'ye think He'd see such villainies done an' not out wid his fist to wollop 'em an' give the divil short notices?" was the logical rejoinder of sagacious Peggy; not more ignorant conclusion for her, nor less exalted idea of the Deity, than many theories entertained by her superiors in scholastic erudition of a later day. Her auditory not being in humour to enter upon theological debate, lapsed into silence, till Thady Doyle again broke the spell, saying to one of the men near him:

"Is there anything more about the wreck at Newcastle, Prendergast? I hear there was no one saved but the one Mr. Miles O'Byrne caught hould of."

"Oh, sorra know I know," returned Prendergast, puffing away vigorously between each word; "what dead bodies was thrown in was burrid dacently, an' lots o' goods was thrown in along the coast. The peddlers is busy down among the people buyin' 'em up."

"Musha, God help us, but there's a sight o' trouble everywhere!" again sighed Mrs. Doyle, disentangling a skein of flax.

"So there is, *alanna*," said the pale-faced young woman, drearily; "but we may always count on it whin the banshee gives warnin'."

"Ay, in troth, *aroon*; an,' by the same token, the weird woman has been these three nights runnin' keenin' all round about the counthry," exclaimed the buxom matron, with animation, excited by the evident interest inspired by her information.

"Wisha, now?" cried Mrs. Doyle, resting on her wheel.

"Did you see her?" shouted Nelly, with a cold chill running through her bosom.

"No, *achorra*, but I heerd her," replied Peggy, solemnly. "Och, it 'ud make the hair o' your head stan' on ind to hear that cry, for all the world like a dirge over a bier!"

"No, faith, did ye, now P?" demanded Johnny, brave as a lion to face mortal foe, but with a tremor like palsy shaking every limb, while a morbid pleasure in the super-human thrilled through his heart and inspired the inter-

rogation of mingled dread and delight: "Yer only jokin'."

"Troth, I'm not; I heard it last night as plain as I hear you now, *avic*."

"Well, I'll tell ye what's more," whispered the pale woman, with bated breath and eyes humid with tears, "I seen it."

"God bless us!" ejaculated everyone, with hair standing on end, and icy perspiration breaking in drops on every forehead.

"Ye seen it!"—"What was she like?"—"How was she dressed?"—"Where did you see her?" were the questions put in swift rotation by Kate and Mary, as they came forward from the dresser.

"A small, dawning crathur, no bigger nor a weeny child, an' dhressed in a blood red cloak and hood. Whin I first heerd the cry, I wint to look out, an' sure there it was, fornint my eyes, sittin' in the pourin' rain, up at the very door, cryin' as if its heart 'ud break. Wid that I give a screech, an' clap the door, an' when Brian coome wid the dog he found me lying in a faint on the flure, an' no sign good or bad of the banshee about the place, though he sarched it over."

A dead silence ensued, in which everyone looked aghast upon his neighbour. Euphemia and Larry alone, half incredulous, sought in each other's eyes the expression of their opinion on the subject; not that they by any means doubted the genuine existence of so well-authenticated a personage; but that the mysterious being should have been brought so close to their own door they held apocryphal; and so each, busy with secret cogitation, maintained profound stillness, until Mrs. Doyle, rising from her wheel, said:

"I dunna, Thady, but it's time to be going down to poor Mooney's wake; I daresay the neighbours is all gathered by this. *Ochone, ochone, acuishlah machree*, but it's yerself was the quiet, dacent man, that never riz a hand but for to help a neighbour, or to make a spree at fair or patthern; an' it's could an' dead yer lyin' this night *avouchal*, wid the salt tears o' them that loved ye well

fallin' like the rain upon yer bier, *och, orra, orra!* on poor Mat."

"*Louersha hene,*" murmured the pale woman, standing up to go, "but it'll be the sorrowful berrin' the day the seven coffins goes into ould Slieve Gadoe churchyard; there won't be a dhry eye in all the county. An' to think of poor Rose O'Brien that I seen this morn a hale an' hearty woman standin' on her own flure, givin' a noggin o' butthermilk an' a male o' praties to the little lame *boccagh, Shaun arouca. Wirra strua! wirra strua!** God look down on the poor souls, the widdy an' orphans left dissolute this night; may the Mother o' God comfort 'em. Good-evenin', ma'am, an' God speed yez all. Coome on, Brian, *a hagar,*" addressing her husband, who, assenting, placed his *dudeen* in his waistcoat pocket, saying:

"Ay, sure it's time we wor in it; an' I have to be down early the morrow wid the kishes an' pony for a load o' turf to Naas, an' to call at Kilcullen an' Ballymoreustace on the way."

"Good-evenin', *alanna,* an' sure we'd have been wid ye, only we're promised to go to Mooney's wake to-night; but to-morrow, plaze God, we'll go over to poor Rose that hasn't left the warrant behind her of a finer woman or a betther neighbour, wife, an' mother, *ferriergare, aroon m'anima,*" returned Mrs. Doyle, launching out into earnest panegyric of her deceased friend, as she took leave of the couple who set off in that direction; then turning to Peggy Cullan, also preparing to go with her husband, Andy, she said: "Ye might as well, *alanna,* lave goin' to poor Kevin Kelly's corpse house till to-morrow, an' coome wid us to Mooney's.—Lord, save us! what's that?"

Arrested in her sentence, Mrs. Doyle, with fallen jaw and dilated eye stared wildy round, and met only panic-stricken faces, as a gentle rapping with knuckles was heard at the door; for in the gregarious community, of which Mrs. Doyle formed a member, it was understood that the door, ever on the latch, gave free ingress to every visitor, and dispensed with the ceremony of craving admission any hour before bedtime. But intensified to its agony

* *Alas! alas!*

was the dismay of every bosom, when a low, moaning cry of distress, accompanied by unknown words, uttered in some strange, unearthly accent, fell upon their alarmed ears; added to this, the dog, lying upon a turf creel in the corner, set up a furious clamour of yelp and bark; the old gray cat jumped upon the table and looked towards the door; and the cocks and hens, roosting among the rafters, fluttered uneasily, and showed signs of disturbed rest, all of which portents seemed to betoken evil at hand. Stouter than the others, Johnny Doyle, after some hesitation, opened the little casement to peep cautiously out; but swiftly drawing in his head again, he ejaculated: "Good Lord! it's the banshee!" This was the climax: no one swooned or fainted; but some faces grew ashy and some purple, while all seemed threatened with asphyxia from tightened breath. The small, tiny voice without meanwhile wailed mournfully on for some moments—ages of horror—and then, slowly retreating, waxed fainter and fainter, and died away. There is a culminating point, beyond which human emotions of joy, sorrow, pain or fear, may not strain; then with the ebb of the tide comes apathy or reaction; so here, out of desperation, sprang courage to confront the worst; and Thady Doyle, being the first to regain firmness, opened the door to look out, despite the warning caution of his friends. A balmy breath of night air and a silvery stream of moonlight flooded the obscurity of the sheiling, bringing out in more distinct relief the shadowy forms grouped in the flickering glow of the turf fire, but no sign of living thing without met the eye; the trees waved with a gentle motion in the languid breeze, and the stars shone brightly in the unclouded heavens above.

"Mother of God! what is it, at all at all?" cried Mrs. Doyle, with faltering speech.

"Sorra sight o' anything I see," returned her husband. "Johnny, *avic*, ye only tuk a rise out of us; ye seen nothin' barrin' the *lusmore*, an' *gosh raheenie*,* wavin' their heads among the heath."

"Begorra, I did; I seen it standin' in the moonlight as plain as I see yerself, *athair*," persisted Johnny: "a weeny

* Broom and fern.

thing like what Brian Cormac's wife tould us, wid a red cloak an' hood, an' black hair sthreamin' over her face. *Achierna*, it bates Banagher!"

Satisfied that disaster was now looming above them in some form, with looks and speech expressive of submission to the divine will, mingled with interjections of sorrow, the resigned peasantry expedited their departure to the wake, trooping all together for protection, and soon the sheiling of Thady Doyle was deserted by all, save Euphemia, whom Miles had prohibited from going to wakes or fairs, much to her regret. Nelly, indeed, and Larry, too, had offered to stay to keep her company, as had also Kitty; but Euphemia, whose most prominent virtue was unselfishness, while her most pre-eminent feature was courage and fearless spirit, rejected an offer which she well knew would have debarred them of much pleasure. So saying she would go to bed, she saw them off, and stood looking after them till they were out of sight; then she turned to rake together the embers of the fire, and seating herself, lapsed into a train of solitary musing, but not for long, of mind too active for repose. She was on her feet again, and to the door. The banshee distracted her imagination only, to set her wits at work, and give motive to her energy. She would like to see it with her own eyes, to hear it with her own ears; she would even speak to it if she met it, and learn whatsoever tidings of which it was the bearer. The idea, conceived in thought, was not slow to embody itself in purpose. Gently closing the door behind her, and taking the dog, she set off in quest of the banshee, arguing to herself: "It must have gone to some other cabin;—not, of course, anywhere there's a wake, but where she has to warn someone else." And away she sped, the dog leaping and barking beside her, as she took her way towards a remote hut, nestled among mountain paths. The reader may smile incredulous, for it is seldom, indeed, that such pursuit has been crowned with success. Nevertheless, Euphemia's quest was successful beyond her most sanguine expectations, since she had not traversed a hundred yards when, arrested by the dog springing away, and barking vociferously at some object concealed in a thick clump of

brushwood, she turned towards it, and there with awe beheld the identical banshee cowering in terror from the animal, and looking the very picture of suffering and misery. As lost in astonishment, Euphemia stood still, gazing upon the eyes that peered so wistfully into hers, the mysterious being rose, and made a demonstration of approaching. That was enough—all Euphemia's courage evaporated, and, without asking any questions, she meditated a hasty scamper, and had actually made some swift paces, when a shriek of terror, attracted a hasty backward glance, and she beheld the object which had evidently followed her rapid flight pinioned and prostrate under the grip of the dog. This brought her to a standstill; her sense told her that if the thing were indeed a banshee or supernatural visitant the animal could not take hold of it. Reassured, she returned, called off her canine champion, assisted the affrighted stranger to arise, and briefly addressed her: "What are you?" Syllables, strange and unknown, fell upon her ear, and taking hold of her hand, with piteous eyes looking into her face, the little one cried bitterly. Euphemia felt her heart moved to compassion; though still not quite sure of the terrestrial nature of the unknown, who, however, seemed to be in trouble she could not explain. Tales of fairy and genii, which she had been lately reading, came to her mind. What if this should be some enchanted princess, like the White Cat, or some visitant escaped from fairyland, but yet under fairy spell to be broken by talisman applied by mortal hand. Quick as thought her swift intelligence suggested a test: she drew from her bosom a crucifix, and, blessing herself, held it up to the stranger, who, as instantly comprehending the suggestion, took from her own neck a corresponding symbol in gold, and, presenting it, she smiled and laughed and blessed herself in turn. Euphemia perceived that the object was neither banshee, fairy, nor enchanted princess, but a Christian of mortal mould, though where she came from, or who she was remained as yet a dark enigma.

"Can't you speak English, or French, or Irish, and say where you come from, and what it is you want?" continued

Euphemia. "I think, after all, you're only a child like any other. If I could but understand what you say! I don't know your language."

The stranger, in response, only shook her head, yet seemed as if with greedy ear she strove to take in every word of the speaker who, at length disappointed, set off homeward, the stranger, to her amazement and annoyance, keeping close beside her. Together they arrived at the threshold; Euphemia entered, and the stranger, uninvited, followed. With concentrated attention she appeared, half-shily, half-inquisitively to scan the interior, till spying a piece of griddle cake upon the shelf, she made eager sign to have it, and Euphemia, giving it to her with a mug of milk, she ate with the avidity of one who had been long fasting, after which, with the hand of Euphemia, which she had repeatedly kissed, looked in hers, she sat down upon the hearth before the roused-up fire, leaned her head upon her lap, and dropped off into a deep slumber. Returning at dawn from the wake, the Doyle family, pioneered by Kitty Burke in advance, stood still upon the threshold at sight of Euphemia fast asleep in the carpenter's arm-chair, and the banshee reposing along with the dog at her feet.

Roused by their entrance, the children wakened up, and the stranger, shrinking behind Euphemia, appeared to shun the prying eyes, all centred upon her with acute scrutiny.

"*Gra machree a colleen ogue!* is it a banshee, or what is it, at all?" exclaimed Kitty Burke, staring hard at the paradoxically old young face before her, while the others took note of the silk stockings and red morocco boots in which the tiny feet were cased, and the blue velvet frock, and dark crimson mantle of fine Spanish cloth that arrayed the small figure, and the black silky hair that clustered in tangled tresses round the clear, olive-complexioned cheeks, and the lustrous brown eyes shining beneath heavy, arching lashes. "Arrah, musha, it ain't a banshee, but some child that's sthrayed, an' belonging to rich people, too," said Kitty, fearlessly taking it in her arms. "Spake, *alanna machree*, sure yer ould enough to tell yer story, barrin' yer

dumb, poor thing, for ye must be eight years ould, anyway, an' a cute little one, I warrant. Musha, Miss 'Phemia, hōw did she come in?"

"I went to look for her, and found her in the *losso** olump under the hawthorn hedge, and she followed me home," said Euphemia.

"Glory be to God, *alanna!*" exclaimed Mrs. Doyle, whose apprehensions were not dissipated by this account; "ye had best not have meddled wid the crathur, Miss 'Phemia. What if her own people—that's the good people*—be lookin' for her, an' find her here, shure its murdered we'll be."

"Sorra fear, Molly," returned Kitty, whose long town residence had not by any means weakened her faith in the lore of fairy; but she had spied, and now held up to view, the little crucifix suspended round the child's neck. "No leprechaun or *sluashie* iver dared face the like o' that. No, *achorra*, she's a Christian child, an' one of our own persuasion, too, an' no heretic, by the same token, howsomever she coome here."

Satisfied by this assurance, and no longer gazing on the uncanny thing with scared vision, Moll Doyle leading the example, all crowded round the little stranger seated peacefully and confidingly on Kitty's lap, and looking with eyes of yearning trust into theirs.

"Queen o' glory, but it bates Banagher!" ejaculated Mrs. Doyle, emboldened to take the crucifix in her fingers, but for the prudent purpose, entertained in secret, to make sure that no delusion had been practised upon their optical sense.

"An' is it dumb the little crathur is, or can she spake at all?" cried the honest carpenter, who had been lavishly sprinkling himself and family with holy water, to secure them from the spell of witchcraft and other evil, till sight of the holy symbol, backed by Kitty's shrewd speech quite banished all dread from his bosom.

"She's a purty little *colleen*, anyway," observed Mary Doyle. "Take off her cloak, an' let's have a good look

* Bramble.

† Fairies.

at her. *Musha*, but she's a rare little princess. Look at the darlint lace frill an' cuffs thrimmin' the neck an' sleeves o' her beautiful velvet frock," continued the carpenter's eldest daughter, as she untied and threw off the hooded mantle which enveloped the child's figure. "Lord bless us! where's she from, at all at all?"

"Spake, *acuishla*. If ye've got a tongue in yer head, say somethin'," cried Kate, coaxingly, and sagaciously she added: "Shure if it's from any foreign parts she is, Miss 'Phemia knows enough o' Frinch to discoorse her."

"Or Larry there, that's illigant at the Latin," said Johnny, fired with as much curiosity as the rest, looking at his brother standing by, also immersed in wonder.

Complying with the general appeal of all, Larry propounded some interrogation in Latin. The child stared hard, evidently straining with eager attention to catch the sense of the words, but in vain, and she shook her head hopelessly.

"That ain't a good sign, I'm afeard," observed Winnie Daly, a crone who had accompanied the Doyles from the wake. "Shure if she wor a Christian she'd know somethin' o' the blessed Latin."

"Arrah *musha*! how much do ye know of it yerself, that goes the round of all the stations, let alone a weeny bit of a *colleen*," retorted Thady Doyle with scorn. "You talk to her, Miss 'Phemia, *aroon*."

"'Tisn't any use, Thady," cried Euphemia, standing by Nelly, more practically employed lighting the fire and washing a pot of potatoes to put down to boil for the breakfast; "I spoke to her in every language I could think of, and it's all Greek to her."

At that moment the weary child, either becoming impatient or frightened, began to cry and whimper cabalistic words in an unknown tongue.

"I tell ye she isn't lucky; she's undher a charm," exclaimed the crone, blessing herself vehemently. "Did ever anyone hear the likes o' such spache, for all the world like the voice o' the wind upon a fairy *clearseach*, or the pipes of the *coelshie* by the haunted rath? Put her out, I

tell yez, or there's no end to the soith o' misfortune she'll bring to the house ; the Lord purtect us ! ”

“ Go long wid yerself an' yer prate,” angrily cried Thady Doyle, observing the effect of the speech upon the simple auditors, and taking the child in his arms. “ There, *deelish ! Wist, machree !* don't cry. See what I've got here,” and he extracted from his pocket a piece of sugar-stick some hawking vendor of sweets had given him at the wake.

“ Very well, Mr. Doyle, have it yer own way,” said Winnie Daly, as bitterly offended at her opinion being discountenanced as the most scientific propounder of a new theory or dictator of a new creed could be at finding his argument rebutted or cavilled at by an audacious sceptic. “ All I've to say is, if you spake to the *arib** woman, Stacie Muldoon, maybe ye'd heed her, *avic*, or the fairy man, Shamus Beg Darig, that found out the witches that used to milk Nano Casey's cows in the night, an' thin escape before morn, in the shape o' hares, up to the hill. Anyhow, as I haven't no wish to be fairy-sthruok, I bid yez good-morn', an' Molly, *asthore*, keep an eye to yer milk an' butther, I bid ye.”

“ Go along wid yerself for an ould *blatherumscate*,” said Thady, sitting down with the child on his knee, and stroking her head. “ I niver knew harm cum o' doing a good turn yet to man or baste ; an' shure, *colleen*, if ye belong to the good people itself it ain't an evil turn agin thim as befriends ye ye'd do ? Maybe it's a crock o' goold instead ye'd be lavin wid us, *avourneen*. An' coome, Molly, stir yerself, woman, an' hurry the breakfast, an' let's get off in time for the berrin'.”

“ What burying, Thady ? Sure they're not going to the churchyard before to-morrow ? ” cried Euphemia, who was busy skimming milk at the dresser and filling the noggins, while Kitty Burke was feeding the fowl at the door, and Johnny was, with his sisters Mary and Kate, setting off with the pails to milk.

“ Ay are they, *dil machree ?* ” responded Mrs. Doyle,

* Herb.

taking the bellows out of the hand of Nelly, who now, supinely sitting on her heels, was intently surveying the strange child reclining quietly upon her father's bosom. "Father Murphy, God bless him! coome down to the wake, an' tould us that, as he had to go down to-day to Ferns and Enniscorthy, an' there wor signs o' throuble by new regiments of soldiers comin' down—Lord Roden's Fox-hunters to the Curragh, an' Beresford's Bloodhounds, an' the Ancient Britons, an' lots o' Hessians an' foreign soldiers billetin' on every cabin—it was best get the bodies dacently interred in time. Lord save us! I dhread but there'll be massacre!" and she gave the pipe of the bellows a thrust into the fire, and vigorously blew up a strong blaze under the bubbling boiler suspended upon a hook above it.

"And so they're all to go out to-day?" murmured Euphemia, in tone of disappointment. "I thought I could have got over on the pony to Miles, and asked him to let me go to-morrow. I hate Miles, he's so cross and proud; and if Hugh were here, and gave me leave, I'd go in spite of him, and ——"

"*Huist*, darlint," said Kitty, coming in. "Misther Miles is very good to ye, an' ye wouldn't vex him by stubbornness an' disobedience, afther he forgave what ye done before. Stay at home, *alanna*, an' read yer story-books, an' play wid this little one, an' thry an' amuse her."

"An' I'll lave ye sugar an' ourrants, for a cake or a pud-din', an' ye have eggs an' crame galore, *acuishla*," said Mrs. Doyle, poking the potatoes with a stick, to find if they were done.

Euphemia yielded sullen submission to fate, envying the happier destiny of Nelly and Larry, who were at that moment engaged in driving back a couple of restive pigs which had broken from their sty and made resolute demonstration of inviting themselves to breakfast with the family, and, in a fit of heroic sulks, observed: "I don't want any cake or pudding, and I wouldn't be bothered with that little leprechaun; so you may take her with you," to neither of which gracious assurances Kitty or her foster-mother paid the least attention.

The meridian sun, like a shield of gold, was blazing in the blue dome of heaven, unflecked by a single vapour, when a long funeral train, composed of many hundred persons, wound up the wild, zig-zag road leading to the ruined mountain cemetery of Slieve Gaddoe. No passing-bell announced that the earthly tenements of souls gone home were being conveyed to commingle dust with dust, until the sounding of the Archangel's trumpet shall call them once again to put on the cast-off garment, and stand living men in the flesh once more, face to face with friends and foes. But far away—far away over the purple, heath-clad hills, over the desolate moor, dotted with rushes and stagnant fens, where the rabbit and hare disported, and the plover and bittern screamed; over lonely plains traversed by devious footpaths and meandering streams; over tangled copse and wastes of yellow furze, browsed by goats; over solitary hamlet and dark, waving woodland, floated upon every breeze, redolent with the perfumed breath of spring, the fragrance of her garland of violets, hawthorn, meadow-sweet, woodbine, dogrose, daffodil, cowslip, and primrose, with countless balsamic herbs, almost oppressive in their surfeit of fragrance but for the light, airy flash of the frequent zephyr's wing, scattering cool freshness around, and sprinkling, as with unction, every brow. Upon every such breeze was borne a wild, weird, melancholy strain of music, which, heard blending its symphonies with the hues of twilight, or the mystic beams of moonlight, had been supernaturally awful; but heard even now, in the full bloom of nature, and the open eye of day, the vibrating pulsations of the mournful chaunt, the Celtic *caoine*, the wild *ulla lulla*, the choral refrain of the Irish death song, now swelling in sublime pathos aloft, now dying in weeping numbers; now wailing fitfully broken upon the ear, now gushing like a tuneful rill, plaintive and low, it thrilled every nerve with sympathetic emotion, irresistible to the most callous, and, yielding to the infection of sorrow gliding into the bosom, an unwonted sadness, at least, should conquer natures that could not dissolve in tears. Amid such *requiem* dirge, wafting the prayer of intercession to heaven's gates for the departed souls, the corpses of their

murdered neighbours were laid to rest beneath the walls of the old abbey, and then, Father Murphy, standing upon a little eminence, waving his hand to impose silence, addressed the people, who thronged and pressed around to hear him :

"My children, sad has been the office imposed upon us this day, even that of laying the green sod over the cold remains of those who yesternorn' were like yourselves, and among yourselves, in the flesh, of wetting the clay above them with our tears, and wearying heaven with cries for their spirits' pardon and rest in glory. But, my children" (his voice faltered), "while I weep with you, ay, burning tears of sorrow and indignation, shall I not, your father, guide, and friend, also reprove the impulsive ardour which led you to disregard my earnest entreaties, my solemn warnings, even while I lament the persecution that goaded you to resistance—that resistance to law and authority which I have never ceased to deprecate. Carried away by passion you forgot, some of you, my counsel, nay, my command ; and when the oppressor smote you in his tyranny, instead of committing your cause to Divine vindication, you must needs vindicate yourselves. So, behold the result ! What availed your strong hands, and your sharp pikes, and your pitiful numbers, but to give that pretext to the enemy for which he hungered, to slaughter you and your wives and children without mercy, to wreck your little homes, and send you forth naked upon the world. O children ! I have not time to say to you now all that my heart yearns to pour forth, for business calls me hence ; but, once for all, I pray, I conjure you, hear my voice, and obey my injunction. Let this hour of hurricane and dark disaster blow over in peace. Brave not the wrath of evil men, armed both with the will and the power to afflict you. Strive by submission and by patience to court at least a respite, till his angry passions cool down and better feelings animate his breast. Should it be God's will to permit them still to wield the scourge, bend in acquiescence to each stroke. Remember the early Christians, your forefathers, what things they suffered to enter into that glory which no man can take from them, and where, sitting

upon eternal thrones, crowned with sunbeams and clothed in the hues of the rainbow, with every tear they shed shining like a gem upon their garments, they look down upon you waging your earthly strife with the demon, exulting in your victory, and impatient to receive you into their bliss. Come, every man, pledge me once more that, whate'er betide, he will not madly rush upon destruction by being his own avenger; but commit himself to the care of the Almighty, whose blessing I here invoke upon every head."

Slowly, reluctantly, dubiously the congregated peasantry yielded to the prayer of their pastor, who fervently called down benedictions upon them. Many, indeed, impatient of his exhortations, murmured among themselves.

Johnny Doyle whispered, *sotto voce*, to Terry O'Toole, beside him: "Augh, what's the good o' the pikes to us now? It's just foolishness his riverence is talkin'. Is a man if he's attacked not to defend himself, does he mane?"

"Faix, I'll hould my grip o' the pike, anyway, come what will," grunted Terry, whose brother was among the slain.

"Och, musha, his riverence is too hard," observed Moll Doyle, much dissatisfied, to Kitty. "Shure a poor-spirited hen 'ud fight for her chickens, if they was attacked by a cur; an' it's a mane baste wouldn't defend its young in danger. I know if I seen my childhre in jeopardy, it 'ud go hard wid me to stay quiet—an' I wouldn't.

"Troth I dunno; he must mane it only in raison," suggested Kitty, puzzled a good deal. "I'd be sorry, if a fellow hit my Ned, to see him take it like a poltroon; I'd be ashamed of his father's son, so I would."

"All I know is," said O'Brien the ploughman, stalking away, "I'll meddle wid no man that doesn't wid me or mine; and any that does I'll hit him a lick o' my *clogh alpeen*, if it wor the colonel o' the regiment."

"I've made ten score stout pikes," growled Mooney the blacksmith, "an', by Jabers, I'll not stint the loan of 'em nor the use of 'em neither, if so an' they be wantin'."

"Lord send we'll have no need for 'em," said Thady

Doyle; "but sure if we have, it's well to have 'em to the fore, anyway. Johnny has got five stowed away in the hayrick. Coome home, Thady, you an' the gossoons, an' have a bit o' bacon an' cabbage; I've axed poor Terry an' two or three more, an' we'll take a sup at Cavanagh's to keep up our hearts while the wife, wid the girls an' Kitty, goes on afore to have the dinner agin we get home."

Mooney, being agreeable, they adjourned to a *shebeen* on the way, while his helpmate, with her sons and daughters, Kitty, and a few female friends, discussing the events of the times, trudged before, to arrange the domestic concerns, and inveigh to their hearts' content against the pacific disposition of their pastor.

CHAPTER XXVI.

A SCENE OF HORROR—COLONEL ERSKINE OF THE 5TH LIGHT DRAGOONS AND ROMNEY'S FENCIBLES.

"There are things of which I may not speak;
There are dreams that cannot die!
There are thoughts that make the strong heart weak,
And bring a pallor into the cheek,
And a mist before the eye."

LONGFELLOW.

It was ten o'clock, a.m., when the Doyles set out to follow the funeral procession to Slieve Gadoo; it was about four o'clock in the afternoon of the same day when, with the addition to their family of the unknown child, they sat at a plentiful dinner composed of a large piece of a fitch of bacon, crowning a pile of cabbage, and a goodly square of salt butter opposite a trencher of floury potatoes, to which, assisted by a few invited guests, they were doing ample justice. Mooney the blacksmith, yet gloomily dejected for the loss of his brother and eldest son, ate in silence, casting from time to time paternal glances upon two younger striplings, upon whom all his hopes now

centred as the staffs of his declining years. Terry O'Toole, who had also lost a brother, was there, and Donough O'Brien, with Dan Donovan, who had lost a little girl, and Morgan Cavanagh, whose sister had been Neal More's young wife, also Pat O'Regan, a suitor to Mary Doyle, and Murtough Gorman, a drayman and parcel carrier for the neighbourhood, all stalwart young men, whose sympathies for their lost friends found vent not in loss of appetite, or melancholy musing, but in fierce denunciation of their murderers, and in total oblivion, else bold disregard of Father Murphy's injunctions, and in vows to avenge them. While heartily they ate and assuaged the pangs of hunger with food slaked with draughts of buttermilk, and solaced the pangs of hunger with voluble clatter of tongues, the sounds of steps were heard approaching the half-open door, and with a kindly "God save all here!" an athletic, middle-aged man, equipped in patched corduroy small clothes, darned stockings, hobnailed brogues, and a somewhat shabby relic of what had once been a comfortable frieze *cotamore*, with a coarse, broad-leafed straw hat on his head, and in his brawny hand a shillelah, which might have passed for duplicate of that said to have been used by Hercules of lion-braining fame, stood upon the threshold.

"God save ye kindly!" was the ready response to the traveller's greeting. "Come in an' rest, *avouchal*, an' have a bit wid us," continued Thady Doyle, rising to welcome the stranger. Then, as their eyes met, with changed aspect, he exclaimed, in accents of unfeigned surprise:

"*Dar Croisth!* if it ain't Ellen Cormac's brother, Art! Why, thin, Art, by every saint in glory, is it you, man?"

"Troth it is!" returned the other, giving back with interest the grasp of his friend's hand; "an' mighty glad I am to see ye, 'Thady, an' be agin wid my fut on the ould sod, an' to see the wife an' childhre, an' all belongin' to ye lookin' so brave and hearty."

"But whin did ye get out, Art *avic?*" cried Mrs. Doyle, coming forward. "Shure we thought ye was thransported at the least; or is it one o' the sigus afore the ind o' the world, that they did justice for onced to the likes o' us."

"*Uisha*, neither one nor t'other, *agra*," responded the man, with a sudden lurid gleam of ire revealing a desperado in every feature. "The day o' judgment 'll be come an' gone afore the Sassenach 'll do justice or marcy in the country. Faix, no; I did myself both one and t'other, wid a few more gossoons, Tim O'Leary, Shawn Beg's brother, among 'em, that was as innocent of the crime they charged him wid of firin' Squire Hackett's bawn, by rason he was wid me at Donnycomfit, near Celbridge, the day I planted little Biddy, the *crater*, and so wasn't in that part at all; but, sure, didn't iveryone know it was Paddy M'Grane got it done, an' laid it to him by rason of an ould grudge he had agin him for gettin' the prefer to be Squire Hackett's steward, instead of a frind of his own. How-andiver, Tim an' myself, an' Lanty Nolan, an' Darby an' Owen Sheehan, that knew it 'ud go hard wid us, by rason of informers an' false swearin', whin the 'sizes coome, an' the judges lendin' themselves to thim as wants to clear the country of us—begorra, we sez among ourselvss, 'shure, if we go to the gallows, or beyant the says, it can't be no worse wid us, anyhow. an' wid that we settled to thry an' escape.' Well, to make a long story short, we fell on the two turnkeys, an' 'just hit 'em a rap on the skull to make 'em hould their tongues, an' scaled the walls."

"*Milloon mulla!*" ejaculated the blacksmith. "An' what'll ye do wid yerself now, Art, that the ould cabin is pulled down, an' Cicely an' the childhre gone to the road-side?"

"Why, for want of a betther, I'll stick to the new thrade; an' the next time I'm cotch it won't be for nothin', I warrant ye, Thady, *aric*."

"Faix, an' I'm thinkin' ye won't be long out of employment," growled Donough O'Brien. "The parsons is doin' their best to help the Government. Ye heerd, did ye, what happened down at the village yistherday?"

"Ay, I heerd the people talk as I coome along," returned Art, greedily devouring the mess of victuals set before him; "an' on my way I met Mick Brennan oocomin' from the fair o' Baltinglass, so we walked on together till just a while ago, the wife, wid a babby in her arms, an'

five childhre, met us cryin' like the rain: 'An' och, Mick jewel,' sez she, 'it's a black hearth yer coomin' to, for the parson was down for the tithes, an' all I could say they wouldn't wait till ye coome home from the fair, but tuk the little cow, worth six pounds; an' thin coomes the agint, an' saizes the pig for the rint; an', as he said he wouldn't fetch the sum, he tuk the bed an' the fowl. An' betune himself an' the proethor pullin' an' dhraggin' at all they could lay hands on, there's nothin' left us, darlint, but the four mud walls, we that was so snug. Such villans I niver seed! The very poor dumb baste of a dog, they clove his skull on the hearth; an' there's lots o' neighbours went out to be burrid to-day from the village beyant, an' more lyin' wounded in it by the sodgers.' Wid that Mick give a groan, an' sot down upon the step o' a stile. 'Arrah, man,' sez I, jibin' at him like (he was always such a one for settin' up for abadience to the law, an' a patthern o' good behaviour), 'shure ye've had vally for yer goods; hadn't ye long enough the shelther o' a roof that was too good for a Papist, I heerd one o' the conundrums myself say?'"

"Who's the conundrums? askin' yer pardon," interrupted Thady Doyle.

"Why, the family wid all the quare names," said Art. "One is Snarly-snap-at-us, an' another Happy-man-in-us, an' another Liquorice, an' another Ostritch, an' Backgammon, an', och!—"

"Maybe it's some marks that's on 'em," suggested Mrs. Doyle; "anyway, go on, Art, *avic machree*."

"Well, ma'am, I says to him: 'An' as for the tithe debit, hadn't ye the parson's prayers for the good o' yer soul, an' it's chape, I darsay, he houlds ye have 'em; augh, be rasonable. But *avouchal*,' sez I, seein', affther awhile, he looked like a man goin' to dhrop, 'it's fine weather, glory be to God, for lyin' out; an' as for victuals, what's to hindher ye havin' yer fill o' the best, barrin' a faint heart? Coome, man, sharpen yer skein, an', plaze God, if ye coome wid me to-night we'll fetch home a weather that'll keep us in mate till we can take it's fella.' An', begorra, would you believe, but he jumped up wid fair delight, an' said

he'd be ready on the minnit, an' thin I left him an' the wife, to coome on here, an' thin to go an' ask Lacy to join us."

"You won't have Lacy, thin, to help ye in yer bad work," said Mrs. Doyle, "for he's follyed Dwyer up the hills;—an' it was a shame for ye, Art, to give sich advice to that dacent man in his throuble, an' risk his neck on the gallus. Here, Nelly, *alanna*, if yer done yer dinner, you an' Larry go down to Mick Brennan's, an' take a basket I'll give yez, with some victuals for the childhre."

"I'll go with you, Nelly," cried Euphemia, jumping up.

"Yis do, *acushla*," said Kitty; "a run through the fields 'll do ye good, an' Red Ridinghood 'll stay quiet wid me till ye coome back. Tho', musha, didn't I promise Essy Mooney I'd go over afther the dinner?"

"Where are you goin', Johnny?" demanded his mother.

Johnny, yawning and stretching, evaded answering the question, as he sauntered out on his way to his sweetheart, Nan O'Toole.

Gleesome and frolicking, the children set off, freighted with meal, eggs, butter, a piece of bacon, and some griddle-cake, to the relief of their distressed neighbours—O'Brien, Donovan, and Mooney—who, in their present dark mood, felt rather a sympathetic attraction to the escaped felon. Art O'Loughlin accompanied them as he departed in the direction of the hills. Kitty Burke busied herself washing and putting by the dinner things, Mrs. Doyle went to feed the pigs and poultry, the girls got ready their pails for the milking, while Thady Doyle, who had a good many jobs of work in arrear, owing to the last two days' idleness, bestirred himself to conclude with Terry O'Toole negotiations for taking his son Barny, who had been slightly wounded in the fray, as out-door apprentice, with Mooney's two sons, Con and Christy, to initiate them into the science of his craft, for which they professed a partiality. He had already risen to conduct them to the workshed; while Pat O'Regan, the village philomath, the chapel clerk, and factotum of the neighbourhood—a fine-looking, intelligent, and industrious young man, the sole support of a widowed mother, whom he maintained

in respectable comfort by his varied resources of honest livelihood—lingered to go a piece of the way with Mary and her sister. They were all just in the act of withdrawing upon each one's respective occupation, when Mrs. Doyle, with a bowl of mashed potatoes and oatmeal, with which she had been feeding a flock of young turkeys, half-empty in her hand, came in from the yard, saying:

"Why, as I'm a livin' woman, there's a regiment o' soldiers coomin' this way! Arrah, what brings 'em?"

"Musha, let me out o' this; shure the divil is wherever they are," said Morgan Cavanagh, going his way.

"Likely they're takin' a short out to whathomever place they're billeted on," said Kitty, who had completed her work, and coming to the door to look out,. "Lord save us, Molly, doesn't the sight o' 'em make the hair stan' on an ind on yer head? Faix, I must take the round to poor Essay Mooney's, for it's more nor I'd choose to fall in wid sich company: an' I'm glad they're not coomin' by the way the childhre wint; the blaguards 'ud be for molestin' thim, sartin; anyhow, keep the door shut, Molly, an' I'll not let the grass grow undher my feet till I'm back," continued Kitty, putting on her cloak, with the hood over her head, as she went forth, murmuring, "May the Holy Vargin stan' betune every honest man's home an' harm this night. Amen, a *Chierna*—I pray God!"

"Why, thin, Thady," resumed Mrs. Doyle, after a pause, as, unheeding Kitty's admonition, she continued, as if rivetted by a spell of fascination, to stand at the door gazing upon the formidable array, "I fear that it's coomin' this way they are."

"Och, what 'ud bring thim up this lonesome boreen, that inds in nothin' but heath and a footpath to the churchyard?" said Thady, coming also to look out, with O'Regan, O'Toole, and the girls, now congregated at the door. "Stan' back, childhre, an' let me see. Kate, *achorra*, lay down the pail, an' fetch one o' Miss 'Phemia's pioter-books to amuse that little craythur sittin' by herself in the chimbley-corner, so quiet and still. Why didn't the childhre take her wid 'em for a race? *Louersha*! I do believe, Molly, afther all, its this way they're coomin'. Musha,

what's their business up here? Anyhow, coome in, *aroon*, an' shut the door, an' put by the pails, girls; don't let 'em get a glimpse o' one o' yees for dear life: they're the ruination o' many a poor family, so they are, the villans!"

With hasty steps all drew from the door, and with palpitating hearts, faintly throbbing in bosoms already depressed with prophetic instinct of evil looming near, the dismayed group heard in dread stillness the heavy tramp of approaching infantry.

"Pity we didn't get hould o' the pikes; we haven't a mortal weapon if they attack us," whispered O'Toole to Thady Doyle, who made answer:

"Maybe it's betther as it is; what could three or four pikes do agin 'em? And shure, as Father Murphy says, they can't touch us for no rason, barrin' they seen arms wid us."

"Och, Thady, *avourneen*," faltered his wife, "the heart is leppin' out o' my busom wid' fright, so it is,"

"Arrah, woman, be aisy; they won't touch us, if we show 'em civility. Keep out o' the way, girls, an' let me spake to em. Maybe it's only some information they want to ax for: shure we owe nothin' for rint or tithes, an' they have nothin' agin us."

"Lord, purtect us!—Son o' the Vargin, look down on us!—Cross o' Christ betune us an' harm!"—devoutly ejaculated Mrs. Doyle, as, little appeased by her husband's arguments, she heard the halt upon the threshold, and the loud, stern command, accompanied by the fierce bang of a sabre against the frail portal.

"Open, in the King's name!"

"Yis, yer honour, here we are to the fore," responded Thady Doyle, with an ashy cheek, and a tremor in his voice that belied his affected bravado, as he threw wide the door, and with furtive anxiety scanned the swarm of evil-looking brigands and freebooters, chartered by law, and empowered under sanction of Government livery, to satiate every atrocious passion, according to each one's individual pleasure, upon the unhappy victims of their will. In vain, among the mass of depraved and ferocious countenances grouped before his eye, sought he to single out

one whose repelling aspect, redeemed by the smallest, faintest trace of a better nature, might inspire a ray of hope that to him, at least, appeal for justice or mercy would not be quite in vain. He discovered not one—not one.

"Hark ye, fellow!" cried Colonel Erskine, commander of the 5th Light Dragoons and Romney Fencibles, striding in among the alarmed inmates, while he threw the bridle of his charger to a grim-looking miscreant, who, also himself dismounted, stood among several others on the threshold. "Fetch forth the rebels, give up whatever pikes or other arms are in your possession, and inform us as to the whereabouts of all the United Irishmen hereabout, or whom you suspect to be such, else 'ware the penalty of treason to our Sovereign Lord the King."

"Begorra, yer honour," returned Doyle, bewildered by the voluble tide of peremptory command thundered upon his ear, "if it's rebels ye want ye've coome to the wrong door. Sorra rebel I know of is in the place; an' as to pikes, an' arms, an' United Irishmin, what 'ud 'I do wid 'em? I'm a carpenter be thrade, an' barrin' the tools I work wid, it's little use any others id be to me."

"Hear the innocent sheep bleat?" exclaimed Colonel Erskine, turning to his troopers. "Come, you rascal, who are all these fellows? Don't attempt to palter with me, or think to gull me with a pitiful face and a lying tongue."

"Lord forbid I should lie to your honour," said Doyle, resuming a tone of more intrepidity, and straightening his figure. "Sorra rebel has harbour in the place, much less undher my decent roof."

"Do you go to church, sirrah?" vociferated the colonel, who was noted for his fanaticism even among the most fanatical of his class.

"No, yer honour, I do not; I'm a Roman," replied Thady, cowering before the wrathful eye that blazed upon him with baleful light.

"A Roman, you scoundrel! An infernal priest-ridden croppy! Where's your vagabond priest? Fetch him instantly before me! Is this he?" pointing to O'Regan, who wore a suit of dark frieze small clothes, and had rather an appearance above the common.

"No, yer honour, he's only a frind that dhropped in wid a few others from the funeral ;—all dacent boys, every one of 'em," returned Doyle, gradually gaining more firmness ; "loyal, honest men."

"You hear this loyal, honest man's assertion ?" sneered Colonel Erskine, addressing a demure-looking young man in clerical garb, who accompanied, and now stood beside him. "Loyal, honest men, every one ;—and Romans to boot, eh ?"

The minister sighed heavily, cast his eyes piously upward, then, as if he had taken in fresh fuel to replenish his flagging zeal, with ignited fire flaming in his bosom, he fixed them denouncingly upon the sinner, and, elevating his voice to a pitch of religious frenzy, he said :

"Would, indeed, for the sake of truth, I could corroborate this man's statement ; but the Lord forbid I should lend myself to cloak falsehood."

"Ye can't say we owe ye tithes, anyway, parson a *vouchal*," interposed Doyle.

"Silence !" shouted the colonel. "Go on, Pomfret ; let's hear what you have to say."

"This man knows well," continued the conscientious Sardanapalus, yielding meek acquiescence to necessity, "that it was his son who, in collusion with a priest of the name of Murphy, obstructed me in the performance of my ministry to a dying woman in this parish, one Nancy O'Brien, who had besought my service, and by violent assault ejecting me from the premises, had subjected me to risk of grievous bodily harm, which I can bring testimony to prove. Furthermore, the same notorious character, this man's son, it was who incited the people to resist the payment of tithes at Tubber, on the morning of the 20th, to the Rev. Nathaniel Lamb, and who, at the command of his priest, the above-named incendiary, fell upon the soldiers with pikes and bludgeons, seriously wounding Private Samuel Hogg, Corporal David Skinner, and Sergeant Solomon Sparrow, the priest *incog.* upon the ground all the while, and shouting at the top of his voice—'Pike away, my lads. Skiver the heretics that's robbing ye of

what ye should give to the priest, to escape hell-fire and damnation.' All this I can bring testimony to prove on oath."

Doyle, who had listened to this tirade in silence, astounded at the audacious and unblushing mendacity of the minister of the Reformed Church, in the extremity of his roused-up wrath, discarding fear, and forgetting prudent caution, fired with Celtic impetuosity, made retort:—"Surely, if iver the father o' lies was in man's tongue, Mr. Surly-snap-at-us, he's in yours, to say such things; an' I dar ye, sir, to prove 'em agin our testimony."

"Go to blazes with your testimony, fellow," exclaimed Colonel Erskine. "Who do you think would believe the oath of ten thousand Papists, with the Pope at their head, against the word of one loyal Protestant. See, I billet ten of my men upon you for a month, fellows that will turn you inside out, and if you have secrets hidden under stones will come at them. Meanwhile, where's this reprobate son of yours?—fetch him hither."

"Beggin' yer pardon, sir," returned Doyle, subdued to more humble tone, "I've the lan'lord, Sir Edward Crosby's promise, by rason o' his intherest wid the ginthry about, that no sodjers 'ud be billeted on me; an' as for my son Johnny, sorra know I know where he is this minit—if it ain't his good luck keeps him wherever he is, the poor *gossoon*."

"Humph, ha! So, my fine fellow, you've set up Crosby your landlord, for your buckler, and think that, sheltered behind him, you can frustrate the law, do you? We'll soon show Crosby, and every disaffected Protestant that sympathises with the Papists, how far their intervention may avail, and teach Papists they can count upon no such patrons; hence, revoking my clemency, I shall proceed forthwith to extreme measures. Forward, Higginthorp, Wainright, and Wheeler! Search the premises. Strip, sir; strip! Here, Jones, Thistlebug, and Thompson, haul him out and give him three hundred. What! these fellows grumble, do they? Loyal, honest men, in sooth! We'll put them to the test. Ho, there, Jackson, Mudbanks, Jacob, and Muggins, get ready the picket, rope and

pitchcap. We've all sorts of surgical instruments to make the dumb speak."

No sooner were Colonel Erskine's orders issued than they were obeyed with an alacrity that but too well attested the impatient thirst of his ferocious myrmidons to be let loose upon their feast of torture, pillage, and rapine. No pen may describe the scene of horror that ensued—not though the hand that guides it is inspired to etch the picture, by the instinctive, intuitive impressions, the birth-marks, as it were, traced in characters of indelible record upon the yet unborn soul, whose antecedent progenitors went through the fiery ordeal in every phase, and bequeathed to their lineage the inheritance of awful reminiscences, for ever branded as an heirloom upon the memory of heart and brain.

"Mercy! mercy!" shrieked the wife of the victim, flying to cast herself between the violent soldiery and her overpowered husband, while the screams of her daughters, struggling in the grasp of licentious troopers, distracted her ears. "He is innocent! he is innocent! Oh, spare him, or his blood and mine be upon your heads! If you have the hearts of men in your bosoms, pity—pity the father of my children. Oh, parson, jewel, won't you say one word for the sake of our common Christianity. Oh, Father of Heaven! Oh, Mother of God! Oh, Cross of the Saviour!"

Unheard, unheeded, amid the din of shriek, shout, curse, scuffle, demoniac laughter, ribald jest, and the yells of pandemonium let loose, the unfortunate woman wailed and raved in vain. Thady Doyle, wrenched from her clinging grasp, was savagely divested of every article of clothing, and tied to a gate post, while the whiz of the lash and the groans of the sufferer made sad accompaniment to the jibes of the executioners, and the moans and tears of the afflicted wife.

Meanwhile, within doors, yet more direful was the appalling spectacle. O'Regan, with a short hatchet, firmly clutched in an iron grip, had sprung upon the dragoon who had laid hold of Mary Doyle. Wielding the weapon with terrific force in both sinewy hands, he aimed a des-

perate blow at the head of the assailant, who, parrying with a dexterous swerve the prone descending stroke, it lighted on the head of the young girl, and ended at once her sorrows and her life. Same time the baffled soldier, turning with a fearful imprecation upon the aghast and now unnerved young man, felled him to the earth, and fearfully mutilated the prostrate figure with his bayonet, inflicting no less than five mortal wounds upon his body.

Terry O'Toole, meantime, with his young son and the sons of Mooney the blacksmith, were undergoing their ordeal, each in turn called upon to give evidence against neighbours, to discover United Irishmen or hidden arms, with promises of pardon and reward upon informing, and all protesting their ignorance or inability to satisfy their interrogators. Terry O'Toole was seized and tied up to a cross-beam of the roof, for the then common punishment of half-hanging, which, in his case, it is to be presumed by mistake, terminated in the completion of the sentence; for, intent upon inflicting on the three young boys tortures which the savage tribes of the prairies, the wielders of the tomahawk and the scalping-knife, would have shrunk from perpetrating upon those of years so tender, and subjecting them to the picket and the pitchcaps, till their cries of agony were stilled by swooning unconsciousness, Terry O'Toole dangled in spasmodic contortions, forgotten, till weary nature succumbed, and a limp corpse hung suspended from the rafter.

Thus, despite burning tears, heartrending appeals for mercy, vain menaces, and vainer resistance, an unoffending family—without even the pretext of criminating suspicion—set upon by vindictive malice, was, in one brief hour, given over to the furies of destruction, outrage, and murder. The red blood of the intrepid peasant martyrs deluged the ground, yet not one had purchased respite or grace by implicating any neighbour; and some there were who could have obtained favour upon terms so facile, but they chose rather to suffer than betray. Having satiated their cruelty to surfeit, and pillaged all they could lay hands upon—the yet senseless boys lying where they had fallen, with white faces and convulsed limbs—Colonel

Erskine giving orders to march, the 5th Light Dragoons and Romney Fencible Corps flung burning brands into the thatch roof of the wrecked homestead, and remounting, with a wild cheer of demoniac triumph, they set off to barracks, leaving behind them the self-same scene of woe and wreck that the self-same moon and stars of heaven had shone upon one thousand years before, when the Norseman and the Dane, in whose unhallowed pagan steps they trod, gave temple and sheiling to the flames, and raised the war-cry, "Thor against Christ!", through the land, leaving beneath the blazing pyre youth and beauty blighted, mangled corpses of men, dying forms of children, and a writhing figure locked in the arms of a maniac wife.

Returning from their errand of charity to the family of Mick Brennan, the children beheld afar the conflagration that cast a lurid light upon the night-sky and made a circle of luminous glow in the darkening shadows.

"Ah, musha, what's that light flarin' up forninst us?" said Nelly. "It's like some place on fire."

"Run, run, Nelly, and Miss 'Phemia; it's our own place is afire!" shouted Larry; and with a loud cry he sprang forward, swiftly followed in his rapid race by Euphemia and Nelly. In less than twenty minutes they came within a stone's throw of the burning pile. A small pond of water lay between them and it, and crouching at the edge, they saw a boy bathing his head with water scooped up in the hollow of his hand.

"What ails ye, *gossoon*?—what's coome to pass at all?" cried Larry, out of breath with running.

Con Mooney who, reviving, had crawled from the burning shed, lifted a pallid brow, and feebly murmured: "Och, Larry, we're all murdered," and fainted off.

"Father!—father!—mother!—where are yez?" screamed the affrighted children, rushing forward with headlong speed. As they drew near the blackened walls of the sheiling, they beheld a figure seated upon the floor within the threshold, and Euphemia crying aloud:

"Why, it's Kate; and she'll be burned alive!"

They all set up a shout: "Kate, Kate! come out quick! the roof's going in! Is she deaf, or what?"

Larry hurried forward. "Do ye hear, Kate, *alanna*? Come out!"

But Kate, in a state of stupour or idiocy, did not respond; and ere Larry, hastening to her rescue, had reached the threshold, the roof gave way. The next instant they gazed, dumb-founded, upon the pile that covered all that remained of the once blooming girl; still gazing wildly around in helpless bewilderment—for tears had not yet welled up from their source in bosoms too choked-up with terror—they spied some object gathered in a heap under the hedge that fenced the cowshed from the garden, and making towards it they discovered Mrs. Doyle, supporting upon her lap the head of her yet senseless husband.

"Mother! mother!" they screamed, in a paroxysm of agony, "what ails ye?—How did it happen?—Is father dead?"

And Larry strove to drag off the cloak which she had cast around the mangled form. Heavily, in a sort of dreamy stupor, the poor woman gazed upon her children, as though unconscious of the import of their words; then suddenly, as Euphemia and Nelly clasped her neck, and broke into a passionate gush of tears, crying: "Won't you speak to us, mother, *acushla*? Only say one word, *avourneen*," she started, and shook them off, murmuring, with husky voice:

"Fly away! fly away, childhre, an' hide in the bushes! Don't let 'em catch a sight o' yees; don't let 'em lay a finger on yees; they'll flay yees alive! Where's the banshee? Go, tell her it all coome to pass that she warned; an' fetch the priest to bury us, an' get Masses said for us. Tell him we're all dead, an' he wouldn't let us use the pikes that would have saved us. No; he was in league wid 'em agin us, he that we thought was our friend. Where's Mary an' Kate, my twin roses? Miss Effie, ye might help 'em wid the weddin' gownd, you that's such a fine hand at the stitchin'—an' we'll have such fun yet, such fun, such fun;—lashins *galore*!—an' why wouldn't we—sure we earn it honestly an' hard enough, God knows. But my poor head's all turned topsey-turvy wid the throuble we wint through about the tithes; and though the sun is shinin' now I think it's the moon, an' everythin' looks dark since I lost

my eyesight. *Huisht a suilish machree*, don't cry so. *Uist, n'avrone orth*; ye'll wake up the father, an' he's only just gone to sleep. Och, but it was the quare dhrame I had last night, that the sodgers were scourgin' him at a pillar; just think o' that! an' it was the blessed Saviour I was thinkin' of all the while. *Och, musha!*"

Thus ranted the poor creature, with rapid utterance, that paused not for breath or thought, and then the unfortunate children knew that the reason of their mother was unseated, and kneeling around her, the floodgates overflowed with renewed violence, and the voice of their weeping filled the listening wilderness, broken with words of comfort and endearment, of prayer and supplication, and betimes sobbing words addressed to each other, expressing wonder that none came near to aid or comfort them in their sorrow, mingled with interrogations and suggestions as to what had become of Kitty Burke, Johnny, Mary, and the strange child, whose advent certainly had proved the forerunner of disaster and misery to them all.

CHAPTER XXVII.

KITTY BURKE PUTS A CORPS OF YEOMAN AND MILITARY TO FLIGHT.

"The heart that aches and bleeds with the stigma
Of pain, alone bears the likeness of Christ, and can comprehend
Its dark enigma."—LONGFELLOW.

"Whom hath the earth to perpetrate such deeds
In the cold-blooded revelry of crime
But those whose yoke is on us?
Man of woe!
What words hath pity for despair like thine?"

FORLORN, horror-stricken, desolate, two weary women, carrying children in their arms, and leading two crying, frightened little ones by the hand, traversed, past midnight, the dreary world. It was Kitty Burke and Nora Lanigan, on their way to the anticipated shelter of Thady Doyle. Few words were spoken by either sorrowing companion, until when they came in view of the site where the homestead of the carpenter stood, Kitty, straining her

eyes on every side, could discern nothing but some roofless walls, she exclaimed: "*Alanna machree*, I dunno is it bewitched I am?—for sure this is the place; an' sorra stick I see, but some ould walls an' rubbish. Nora, *acuslah*, look an' see if there's any sign of a house."

Nora, who, under pressure, yielding that passive submission which a weaker mind is ever prone to cede to a stronger one, had suffered herself, in an apathy of despair, to be drawn away by Kitty's urgent remonstrance from the scene of woe and the corpses of the dead before the roof fell in, mechanically obeyed; but no word issued from her motionless lips; and perplexed beyond endurance, Kitty began to run towards the blackened heap, muttering to herself:

"There's been a fire here; for I get the smell of bones an' burnt flesh, an' timber on the air. Lord send it couldn't be Thady's place, an' all in it burnt alive. Mother o' Christ, could the soldiers have come down here, too?"

As if in answer to her question, her eye roving in every direction, at length she spied at a little distance a group of figures cowering beneath the branches of a straggling hedge. She darted towards them, exclaiming: "Crass o' Christ betune us an' harm, what ails yez all? What are yez all sittin' out shiverin' in the cowl'd night for, an' what happen'd the house at all?"

Euphemia, springing up on hearing the well-known voice, was first to speak, for Larry was assisting his mother to bathe the parched lips of his father with water fetched in his cap from the stream; and Nelly was performing the same office for young Mooney, whom they had carried in amongst them, to help the best way they could.

"O Kitty," cried Euphemia, with teeth chattering, not from fear, but long exposure to the keen night air and May frost, that chilled her in every limb, "O Kitty, hadn't we luck not to be here when the soldiers came; we wouldn't have come off better than the rest. Was it with Essy Mooney you stayed so long? Who's that woman with you and the children?"

"Where's Johnny, an' the girls, an' the little one?"

abruptly interposed Kitty, disburdening herself of the infant asleep on her bosom, and glancing wildly around.

"We don't know where Johnny is," said Nelly, with humid eyes that could weep no more.

The boy Mooney, who was now sensible, faltered in languid accents: "I got the little one out o' a windy whin no one was mindin' us in the scrimmage; but the rest, barrin' Johnny, who wasn't there, is all done for. Oh, mother, *avourneen*, my poor head is achin'! Oh, if I could but see my father he'd take me home to die! Oh, Mother o' Marcy, send my father to me. God bless ye, Nelly, another sup o' wather, *asthore*; my heart is wake wid pain."

Gazing upon this sad spectacle, all Kitty's unstrung nerves gave way; even as a spring loses its tension and snaps or relaxes beneath too great a strain, her strong mind succumbed, and, burying her face in her hands, she flung herself upon the sod and wailed aloud, alternately making passionate appeals to the Supreme Being, to the Queen of Heaven, and saints and angels, anon fulminating direful imprecations upon the authors of such misery, and exhausting the vocabulary of words in condolence with the sufferers. This was an impetus to a renewed outburst of grief, so wild and vehement and prolonged that none heard the sounds of horses' hoofs trampling the sward, as the fresh morning breeze wafted the echoes from afar; none heeded the bright beams of the morning sun cresting the hills with gold, as the ascending chariot, mounting higher and higher in the blue arch of the firmament, flashed from its spokes of fire gorgeous radiance upon the world, and touching each brow with a finger of glowing flame, infused again into every bosom new vital warmth and life. At first, in a tumult of alarm, they descried the careering horsemen; but fear gave place to transport when they soon recognised the well-known forms of Miles O'Byrne with his kinsmen, as also Donough O'Brien, Thady Mooney, and Johnny Doyle, who had, in their solicitude for their respective friends and relations, separated from the tardy main body, and spurred on by diverging routes, not to attract attention by keeping together. The three

last-named were, however, on foot, having got rid of their horses when they came beyond safe ground, and Ned Burke brought up the rear.

"How now, my friends? What's come to pass? What means this wail of lamentation?" exclaimed Miles, whose horse was in a foam, riding up in advance of his party, and accosting the group generally.

"Och, Mr. Miles, Mr. Miles, jewel," cried Mrs. Doyle, frantically throwing up her arms with gesture of wild reproach, "where war ye, where war ye? There's been a great battle entirely, an' you not to the fore; an' shure its defayted we are, an' Thady an' the childhre murdered afore my eyes, an' the place a bonfire, an' Father John wouldn't let us use the pikes. Och, *wirra, wirra sthru*, ain't I the woeful woman this day?"

Miles, though as yet ignorant of the poor creature's temporary aberration of reason, deeply sympathising with her distress, made no reply to her clamorous oration, but turned to Euphemia, who sprang to meet him, while Kitty, wiping her eyes, also came forward, courtesying.

"O Miles," began Euphemia, holding the bridle of his horse as he dismounted, "the soldiers have been down, and without rhyme or reason set upon the people;—we aren't the only ones have suffered."

"No, indeed, yer honour," said Kitty, pointing to Nora Lanigan, sitting on the ground, rocking herself to and fro with gentle swaying motion and low monotonous *croon*. "They kem, th' 'tarnal villans, on this poor woman's lone little hut last night, an' afther makin' her daughther a widdy a couple days afore, they dhragged her out of her bed, an' she in her lyin'-in, an' both herself an' the babby is dead. Och, glory be to God! what's to become of us at all?"

Miles, still silent, but evidently overcome with horror, gently pushing aside each made his way to where Thady Doyle, restored to consciousness, but in extreme suffering, had raised himself partially up and was looking at him with feverish and beseeching eyes. Meanwhile, O'Brien, Johnny Doyle, and Mooney approached. Almost paralysed by the scene before him, Johnny stood with gaping mouth and rigid eyes staring at his wrecked home; but Mooney,

recognising his son, whom Gerald Byrne was supporting, sprang over, caught him in his arms in an ebullition of frenzied emotion, and cried, incoherently :

"Con, *avic*, my brave *gossoon*, what did they do to ye? Where's Christy? Who done it; tell me, *agra*, for by the red Cross o' the Saviour I'll have his heart's blood, if I folly him to the ind o' the world."

The boy, who, it was evident, was now dying, stared with glassy eyes and faint attempt at a smile of pleasure : "Praise be to God, I see ye agin, father, *aroon*," he faltered, with gasping breath. "Terry O'Toole is dead, and Christy is dead, and a lot more. It was done by Colonel Erskine's ordhers. They questioned Terry was he a United Irishman an' a rebel, an' he denied it; an' the Colonel said he wor a liar, that he could tell a United Irishman an' a rebel by only lookin' at 'em; an' wid that they hung him up to the rafter, an' out out his tongue, bekase they said it wor no more use to him as he couldn't inform upon any rebels. Thin they took Christy an' me an' Terry's *gossoon*, an' picketted us till our feet was 'most bored through, an' Christy fainted twice; an' thin they boiled the pitch an' shaved our heads, an' poured it into brown paper caps an' put 'em scaldin' on our heads, to make us tell where ye hid the pikes an' how many ye made, an' who had got 'em, an' av coorse we wouldn't tell, father; we kep' lettin' on to know nothin', an' Christy purtinded to be an *omadhawn*; but it wor no use, for the colonel, standin' by the whole while, lookin' on at the min abusin' Kate Doyle, bid 'em for to tear off the caps whin they cooled, an' so they did, an' the scalp o' our heads coome wid 'em. An' thin—an' they bruk the tables an' sit fire—an' ——." The boy grew tired, and convulsively clutched his father's hand in a death grip, then gasped out: "Oh, Cross o' Christ! Oh, Mother! save ——"

His eyeballs rolled, his jaw dropped, and the tortured victim was at rest for ever. The blacksmith shed no tear, though the eyes of those around him were brimming over; he uttered no moan as he laid down the cold corpse, but wiping the perspiration from his brow, he clenched his fist,

set his teeth, and sternly eyeing William, Gerald, and Miles Byrne, compassionately gazing upon the pierced feet, raw scalp, and wan face of the dead boy, he hissed:

"We'll find the pikes for 'em, plaze God; an' whin we bury 'em next it won't be in the earth, but in their own hearts. *Louersha!*"

Fiercely springing up, and taking the body on his shoulder, he strode homeward alone—for O'Brien had gone off before—to see what had befallen his cabin and young children, to find it also a wreck, and no tidings of the inmates, from which he deduced the comfort of thinking they had fled away, and so escaped.

Miles, who had been learning from Thady Doyle a narrative of the whole business from the commencement, now rising and looking upon the group gathered around him, said, addressing Gerald and William Byrne:

"I see full well how it is now. Government seeks not to quell, but to manufacture a rebellious insurrection; and it is not optional with us to avoid it by any attitude of peace or concession."

"I agree with you," said Gerald. "If, after having pulled down the altars and temples of the country, its sacred home sanctuaries are now given over to the devastation of midnight spoliation and murder, it is better stand to our defence, and, if we must perish, fall less miserably, sword in hand."

"Meantime," returned Miles, "I'll go up to Dublin, call on Robert Byrne, whose interest must be good with the Castle, considering his close alliance with the Protestant ascendancy, by reason of his own Buckingham connexion, the marriage of his sister Clare with Colonel Skerrett of the Durham Fencibles, and the Colclough kindred, with others; and get him to represent to Lord Camden the events of which we have been eye-witness, or procure for me an introduction to Castlereagh. There's Gregory, too, lately united with the Harvey family, though taught by the French Revolution not to sympathise much with popular outbreaks; yet he may be of use in a case which bears no parallel, and in which not the people but the Government are the tyrant aggressors."

"Spare your pains," laconically returned Gerald. "Thanks to Sir Jonah Barrington, the Colcloughs and Harveys are not looked upon as staunch partisans by Government; and as to our good kinsman Robert, I do, indeed, apprehend that he is so affected with the tint of his new blood, and the spirit of the times, he would prove but a lukewarm advocate: fortunate he has no son to belie our old prestige. But what are we going to do next. We cannot leave these homeless, shivering creatures without striving to help them in some way."

"I don't see what we can do for them," ruminated Miles. "Effie, my little lady, I fear you've made but a sorry exchange of your safe school for a very unsafe camp. Will you go back?"

"Indeed I wont, Miles," spiritedly responded Euphemia. "I'll stay with Kitty, and Moll, and Nelly; and if you put me back I'd run away again."

"I don't doubt it," he returned, caustically. "But are you not afraid? Think of the escape you have already had by miraculous luck."

"Well, Miles, I'm not a bit frightened; and if I'd been at home I wouldn't have been idle."

"Foolish child! With your silly bravado, what could you have done but have suffered condign chastisement of your temerity. However, you'll come home with me now. I'm not going to leave you to the dictates of your own folly."

"Very well, Miles," she readily assented, conscious that in his bachelor establishment she would have a large amount of liberty, and be invested with much consequence and authority; "I'll be very glad to go with you: but what's first going to be done for Nurse Doyle and Kitty? You know they can't stay here."

While Miles in his utter ignorance and paucity of resource looked helplessly embarrassed at the question, Kitty, who had been hugging her son and greeting him to her heart's content, advanced with serene brow, and renovated spirits, and said, cheerfully:

"Yer honour, I'm quite sure, in the amplash we're in, the dacent man, Thady Mooney, 'ud give us a shelther

under his roof for a few days, till we see the way afore us: he was always a ready warrant to help a neighbour."

"Forward, then! I wonder by what accident Mooney has a shed over him more than his neighbours," said Miles. "Come, Johnny, help me to set your father on the horse?" But finding Doyle unequal to this mode of travelling in his all but lifeless condition, a litter was made of the wife's cloak, which Miles, Gerald, and William, with Johnny, set themselves to carry; while Ned, with Euphemia walking beside him, and Larry and Nelly, led the horses. Young Miles took a little child by the hand; and Kitty, herself again, busied herself to rouse the still afflicted women and urge them forward in the procession, rating and encouraging them by turns.

"Coomme, now, Molly *asthore*; up wid ye, and lave off crooning. These is no times for sich divarsion, glory be to God! an' you wid a fine girl, an' two likely boys yit to the fore. Look at that brave woman, Norah Lanigan, left wid four orphint grandchildre on her, an' see how she bids welcome to the will o' God widout a murmur; an' it's a blessin' is in store for ye, Nora, *acushlah*, if iver there was one. If it wor the very last in heaven ye'd have it for yer patience. Here, jewel, gi' me that child to carry; Molly, take the other one you, an' don't be stanin' lookin' at the ould walls, like as if ye wor at yer wits' inds. There's more in throuble nor yerself, blessed be God's holy name; an' begorra, it's myself thinks I see the one's He's taken to Himsilf smilin' in the sunshine down on us. Sure it's wid 'em we might be afore morn. *Och hone*, but it's a weary world to live in."

Thus bringing up the rere, Kitty, with the two women and children, followed the rapid strides of the litter bearers until they came within view of Mooney's dwelling before sunset, and then all came to a sudden halt at sight of a troop of yeomen and militia, with some regular soldiers, swarming around it. Yells, shouts, cries, screams, and frightful clamour of commingled prayer, oaths, blasphemy and curse, swelled on every side; but the litter bearers and escort being espied, a signal was given, and a rush *en masse* made towards them. Hastily laying down their

burden, the four gentlemen sprung on horseback, drew their pistols, and, ready for action, placed themselves before the trembling women and children. Frightfully riveting their attention, among the approaching gang was one—a man of gigantic dimensions—youthful in aspect, and of feature handsome, but, expressionless as chiselled granite, stolid and cold. Suspended by a rope round his bulky shoulders was an awful burden—a hoary man of average proportion of figure, tied by the neck, plunging, writhing, kicking at the legs encased in military boots reaching to his thighs, and obviously in the last agonies of strangulation. Miles, unable to endure the revolting spectacle, rode out to meet the lieutenant, known far and near as Heppenstal, the walking gallows—a cognomen upon which he prided not a little.

"Soldier, the poor old man will be dead unless you set him free instantly; he is black and choking," said Miles, deeming it wiser to propitiate by mild persuasion than render implacable by asperity those at whose discretion they were entirely placed.

"D—— your eyes!" was the courteous rejoinder of the lieutenant, without a muscle of his ox-like countenance betraying excitement. "Ain't that my business? Have the rebels engaged you for their pleader?"

Miles, curbing his swelling wrath, calmly retained his position, till two officers rode up whom he knew, and immediately accosted: "Colonel Erskine, Captain Swayn. I'm at once sorry and glad to meet you here—sorry that your commission obliges you, as gentlemen, to lead bands of armed butchers to perpetrate excesses upon helpless and defenceless people, which must revolt all the finer instincts of your nature; and glad, hoping that when I assure you upon the honour of a gentleman, all these poor creatures, whom I know well, are innocent of the shadow of guilt or offence. You will kindly afford them your protection and withhold your troops from molesting them further."

"Honour of a gentleman!" sneered Captain Swayn. "I thought, Byrne, you were a Papist."

"Well, I don't see how that can militate against the title I claim. See! that poor fellow is dead!"

"Oh, no Papist could be a gentleman, or a man of honour," softly returned Captain Swayn, carelessly eyeing the limp mass which, having ceased to struggle, Heppenstal dropped, with a dull thud, upon the ground.

"Well, if a Papist may not be a gentleman," said Miles, warming, "he may be a man of mercy, and a Protestant, for being a gentleman, need not be a Nero for cruelty. Come now, Colonel Erskine, endorse my logic, and admit that you did not restrain, as you might, these fellows of yours from acts of cruelty last night, which could not be surpassed by fiends?"

"I can admit nothing, sir, but that that is a fine horse you are riding, and I daresay worth five pounds," smiled the colonel, obliquely eyeing Miles, and patting the neck of the animal. "I'll give you five pounds for him."

"Tippoo Saib is a present from my kinsman, Robert Byrne, of Cabinteely, who purchased him of Lord Howth for a very considerable sum," returned Miles. "I should not wish to part with him."

"Nice customs courtesy to great kings, whereof necessity is the greatest. I want the horse, and must have him. If you cavil, and deem it injustice, blame the law, not me, dear friend. I am invited to dine at Cabinteely to-morrow with Judge Day; I expect Bob, who is a great intimate of his, will be there; and I will bear you harmless of the transfer."

Miles haughtily returned, as Colonel Erskine, extracting a note from his pocket-book, tendered it to him: "I decline the negotiation; put by your money, sir. If empowered by unjust authority to seize my property, it by no means follows that I relinquish my claim to repossess myself of it upon fitting opportunity."

"Dismount, sir, dismount; I haven't time to stand arguing the matter, as I see our fellows are impatient to be at work," irascibly exclaimed the colonel. "Here, Sergeant Pollock, take charge of the animal, and thank my forbearance, Byrne, that in consideration of my friendly disposition I overlook, upon this occasion, the petulant

outburst of disloyal sentiment that might have subjected you to the triangle at least. Ho! Forward! March!"

Quivering in every limb with smothered rage, yet no longer protracting discussion useless as vain, Miles, dismounting, *malgré lui*, presented himself the bridle to Colonel Erskine, saying, with cold, proud smile: "Truly, necessity is a despot to whose arbitrary behest all must cede in turn; to-day it is mine, to-morrow it may be yours. *Eh, bien! Adieu, au revoir, mon brave.*" And amid shouts of derisive laughter, Miles turned superbly away, to follow the little band with the litter bearers, who, taking advantage of the debate that engrossed the attention of all, and directed by a sign from Gerald and William Byrne, had proceeded to the sheiling of the blacksmith, whom they found tied to a cart's-end before his own door, awaiting the punishment of flogging for having been absent from his forge, while his wife, now a moping idiot, crouched at his feet, and his child Teresa, shamefully ill-treated, was crying bitterly with the three young children huddled in terror around her in a corner of the shed. Extricating the victim, who, with dark, scowling brow, indicated a dogged resolution to endure a torture he would yet as fiercely retaliate, all took refuge in the sheiling, timidly speculating upon the sequence of Miles's intervention with the military leaders, till they saw him approach on foot. Then Ned Burke said, in low tone:

"Queen o' glory! but the villans have taken the masther's horse that he loved like the apple of his eye. See how the dumb brute looks afther him; begorra, it's well they didn't know what's hidden undher the ragged coat of the rest of our *garrans* or they'd have put their *comether* on 'em, too." And Ned went out to meet Miles.

Between these two there had not hitherto been much sympathy: Miles, cold, reserved, taciturn, though not a stern master, could not be called a genial one; Ned Burke, on his part also, concealing much latent humour and undeveloped strength of genius and character, with very ardent feelings, beneath a thoughtful, silent, and stolid exterior, never obtruded himself, in any way, upon the notice or the interest of his patron; hence mutely they

met, and mutely they proceeded to the hut, Ned walking a little behind, quite understanding and keenly participating in the emotions that swelled his bosom for the injustice and contumely of which he had been the object. Scarcely, however, had they reached their goal, when young Miles Byrne, anticipating the clamour that hailed his kinsman, exclaimed:

"Look out, I say! These fellows are coming again! What can they be about now?"

"To lay their scores on my skin, what else?" growled the blacksmith. "An' ather murtherin' my father an' the *gossoons*, an' left me a ruinated man, I'd as lief they made an ind o' me, only I hope to live to score it again 'em, which I will, plaze God."

Here Mrs. Doyle, who, by one of those paradoxical anomalies—that unexplained enigma of the alchemy by which fear casts out fear, that subtle effluvia, darting through the brain, by which the shock that unbalanced it reacted upon by another, restores its equilibrium, and anneals to solidity the mind, a while since dissolved to the consistency of fluid, operated upon by renewed alarm, burst the husks that had woven a network over reason, and calmly said:

"Mr. Miles, *avic*, if it's here to defend us you an' the gintlemin is, it ain't the laste use; the sodgers is bint on our ruin, an' it'll only get yez into throuble. Go, lave the place, an' let 'em coome. All I'm sorry for now is that we haven't the pikes—not to fight out for escape, God help us, nor to die wid revinge in our hands, but by houldin' out to make 'em shoot and bayonet us off at onct, widout more perseucution. So go, sir, take Miss Effie, an' if so it be needful for ye to purtind ye have no consarn in us, an' to prove it, ye fire yer pistol, we won't think the worse o' ye if ye hit us, knowin' well yer heart wasn't in it. Here they are! Go, an' God's blessin' be wid ye, an' the Mother o' God look down on us all this day!"

"My good soul," returned Miles, deeply moved by the poor woman's unselfish heroism and generous devotion, and now firmly braced for action, "we shall stay here, and, if need be, all perish together. Come, kinsmen, get out

your pistols. Mooney, my fine fellow, what are you at, in which Johnny Doyle, Ned Burke, and Larry are so ably helping you, along with Kitty?"

"Just a few pikes berried here, yer honour," cried Mooney, tugging, with his assistants, to pull away a heap of stones and plaster behind the hob. "They may be useful, an', plaze God, we won't lave it to yer honour to take all the blows."

Down came a bed of mortar, and in a cavity beneath was seen some score weapons, which were soon dragged forth, and quickly distributed to each claimant, foremost among whom were Kitty, Mrs. Doyle, Nelly, and Euphemia; even Norah Lanigan, roused by the stern crisis of the moment, with newborn energy extended her hand for a weapon, which the blacksmith handed, with a dreary attempt at mirth, saying:

"More power to ye, Mrs. Lanigan; don't stint 'em wid a taste o' it."

Then, with cheeks pale, and some flushed, all formed a semicircle round Miles, as, concealing the pistol in his pocket, he stood at the door, and addressed the colonel:

"So, ho, friend! was it but a ruse after all, or has your gallant heart relented, and a sense of soldierly honour impelled you to restore my bonny steed? If so, with all my heart I thank you."

"Now, my good fellow, do you indeed discover any such sign of maudlin sentiment in my countenance? If so, I may quake and tremble for my sanity. No; I come on other errand. First, my friend Captain Swayn here, has reminded me that the sentence was not carried out against the blacksmith of five hundred lashes."

"*Diable!* that's a good many. How did he merit such penalty?" said Miles, confidentially.

"By George, what a question! Well, to be courteous, *mon ami*, the fellow is a United Irishman and a rebel, in proof of which, when a few soldiers were quartered on him, he stinted the rations, confining them to potatoes and bacon—d—d common food—and next he put them in bodily fear of their lives, swearing that if they but made free with *one* of his wenches he would fell them, as he would an ox,

with his sledge-hammer; and altogether behaved so violent that the defenders of our glorious constitution deemed it more advisable to withdraw from his inhospitable roof and billet themselves on others better disposed. Yes, he merits chastisement. But this is not all: my friend Hunter Gowan, captain of the yeomen, tells me that two of his late recruits have recognised here a lad, one Ned Burke, who had been their fellow-apprentice, absconded from Watkins, their master's; employment, after robbing him to a large amount. Moreover, some of Saunders' fellows tell me that one Johnny Doyle, a noted ruffian, and confederate of one De Lacy, a villain well known to Lord Carhampton, whom he had plotted, with others, to assassinate, but who escaped down here, is at this moment within the shed. Fetch them forth, these three malefactors, that we may deal with them according to their deserts."

"Colonel Erskine," returned Miles, steadily, "pardon me if, instead of acceding to your request to deliver up these victims to wanton malice, I crave your protection for them, till in calmer hour I shall hope to convince you of their innocence, each one, of the guilt imputed to him. I have known them long and ——"

"D——n you, sir," boisterously interrupted Colonel Erskine, advancing. "Who made you special pleader?—and is this a court of trial?"

Before Miles could reply, a brawny arm, grasping his, dragged him into the hut, the door of which was then shut to, same time Mrs. Doyle, putting her head out of a little casement, cried jeeringly:

"Yez want Moll Doyle's son!—which of 'em, ye whelps o' Satan? She has a good many now, anyway, begorra, so come take yer choice. Now, Mr. Miles, Mr. Gerald, and the rest o' yez, let fly the little dogs at 'em." She laughed, vacating her place at the window, as the troops rushed forward, at their officer's command, and began to force the frail barrier between them and their prey.

"Don't precipitate events," said Miles, calmly, laying his hand upon the arm of Gerald, who was in the act of firing. "Let us reserve ourselves for extremity. Effie and Nelly, keep near me." As he spoke, the door flew

open, and the sheiling, invested with armed men, was only yet saved from profanation by the uplifted firearms of the defenders in front and the bristling pikes in the rear. Grimly the besiegers smiled at the small band challenging conflict. Miles, again speaking aloud, said: "You see, Erskine, if you drive us to it, we are resolved to die weapon in hand, not to be murdered. Choose!"

"Pooh! you are a fool, Byrne; and were it not for your kinsman and patron, Bob Byrne, whom I would not disoblige, I'd call you to ready reckoning for your insolence. Come, send out that boy Burke at your elbow, whom Gowan's lads, Tickell and Beakey, point out as a malefactor. Come out, sirrah, and give what account of yourself you can."

"Don't stir from beside me, Ned; I have promised Hugh to care for you, and I will," said Miles, firmly, and arresting a half-nervous, fidgetty movement on the part of the youth.

But now Kitty's maternal fears, excited for the safety of her son, sharpened her wit in the crisis of fate to conceive a stratagem that in all probability saved them from destruction.

"Forward!" shouted the colonel.

"Force the hut and drag out the culprits," cried Captain Swayn.

"Fire and shoot down every man that resists," commanded Hunter Gowan.

"Howld!—jist let me say one word afore ye begin, *avic*," screamed Kitty, thrusting herself between Miles and the troopers. In one hand she held a piece of lighted turf, just snatched from the fire; in the other, a wooden bowl full of forge-dust. "D'ye see that, my brave *gossouns*?" she yelled at the pitch of her voice. "Well, if yez think we'd leifer fall into your marcifal hands nor make a clane escape out of 'em, ye take us for greater fools nor we are; so come on. There's the *gossoun* an' Moll Doyle's sons to the fore; an' more betoken, Moll Doyle an' myself, as good as any of 'em, an' we won't hindher ye, only stan' quiet wid our backs agin the wall, an' the childhre at our feet; but I tell yez, on the faith o'

a Christian woman, that the momint yez crass the thrashil I'll put the lighted turf into the bowl, an' thin, begorra, but it's in fine company we'll all go blazin' together into eternity;—an', ye villans, if I won't up an' tell the Almighty thin, the Masther of us all, what ye done on us to make us do the like. Yerra, what are yez waitin' for?—is it to say yer prayers afore yez go?" And like a wild *bacchante* she waved, as she spoke, the lighted turf round the bowl of what, to the startled eyes of the soldiers, seemed gunpowder.

"Come along, boys; that she-devil is mad as a tailor, an' 'tise'n't worth while running risk for chaps we can nab as well another time," suggested Lieutenant Heppenstal, moving briskly to the rear.

"Ay, 'tis time we were on the road to join Saunders at Dunlavin, to sit in court-martial upon the prisoners," said Hunter Gowan, following Lieutenant Heppenstal. "We can return to-night and fall upon this nest of hornets. I spied two pretty girls among 'em. Band, play up! Croppies lie down."

"Byrne, you shall hear more of this business—probably be indicted for high treason, being proved to have borne arms against the King and constitution, and aiding and abetting the insurgents," exclaimed Colonel Erskine, bringing up the rear.

Miles ironically kissed hands to the colonel, and turning smilingly to the yet flustered Kitty, he said: "Did you ever hear of Joan of Arc?"

"Joan of Arklow, is it, yer honour? No;—who is she, an' where's she from in Arklow?"

"Well, she was a great French soldier; but I deem you quite as good, for, like her, you have routed a host."

"Good-luck to yer honour," grinned Kitty, much pleased with the compliment. "Howandiver, I didn't think they'd ha' been so much afeard o' gunpowdher, which shows they're but poor *spalpeens*, afther all; an' shure, now that we see the way to cow 'em, we must get more o' the rale stuff."

Miles turned his eyes, still smiling as she spoke, upon the dark, beaming ones of Ned, silently contemplating

each with demure attention, and a ray of kindlier intelligence flashed from orb to orb; but themes of sadder interest soon engaged his deeper thoughts as he gazed around the respited group; and Gerald and William drew near him, saying:

"What's next to be done? I don't suppose we have come off scot free altogether."

"No," responded Miles, slowly. "We are now committed to our cause, and must stand or fall with it; there is no retracting. Would that Hugh were here, and Effie safe away!"

"Oh, no, Miles," exclaimed Effie, who stood near, leaning upon a pike-handle; "I'll stay and see the fun out with you all."

"What! not daunted yet?" he returned, gazing with softened lineaments upon the glowing features of the juvenile heroine, so frankly meeting his. "Well, little sister, I cannot but admire your courage, though, if it come to battle, I do not see what post we shall assign to you and your equally intrepid friend Nelly. Perhaps you would accept the post of drummer. But truce with jest. Our position, Gerald, is one of serious difficulty; at every step we are now beset by peril. What do you counsel?"

"My counsel is, that we decamp forthwith from hence to the fastnesses of the Wicklow hills, and so elude the return of our butcherly assailants, or others of their atrocious league," said Gerald, excitedly. "If we mean to join Dwyer, we cannot encumber our march with women and children; hence the necessity of providing some asylum for them the while."

"How are they to be supported meantime?" demanded William Byrne; "heather and bare rocks won't yield much sustenance to supply for the means of livelihood, from which they will be cut off."

"Leave that to Providence," returned Miles. "What, ho!—who comes? Father John, by all that's fortunate!" And he hastened to greet the pastor as he came in, out of breath with rapid walking, and accompanied by Donough O'Brien.

The usually tranquil mien of Father Murphy was agi-

tated, and his bright blue eye emitted unwonted corruscations of burning light, as, grasping the extended hand of Miles, he exclaimed, in accents sonorous and full of emotion, silencing at once the wild outcries surging to every lip, and enchainning every ear with attention to his words:

"I've but returned within the last couple of hours from Ferns, and heard appalled what has come to pass in my brief absence. I see now but too well the manifest design of Government is not merely to oppress the people by persecution, but to exterminate them by wholesale massacre. Wherefore, not to resist tyranny, but to save life, no medium course is left us. Oh, that I had timely foreseen this! But not too late—not too late! Let every man, woman, and child seize pike, brand, and weapon, and follow me. Hitherto I've preached peace to you, my people; now, since such seems to be the Divine will, I lift my voice for war, and a benison on him whose hand shall, in that strife to which we have been goaded, smite the boldest in our holy cause. God of Jacob! God of Moses! bear witness to our justice, and strengthen our arms! Saints of our blood-stained island, hear our suppliant invocation: be with us in battle, and shelter us behind the buckler of your pinions.—Peace! peace!" he shouted, with elevated tone and lifted hand, as, while he spoke, the hurried tramp of many feet was heard. Seized with tumultuous panic, his audience were rushing to the door. Laying hold of a pike, he went before them, and in the gloom of the deepening twilight he discerned a band of about a hundred men or upwards marching steadily towards them. One look, however, sufficed, and he laid down the weapon with a "*Deo gratias*," as Miles said, "It is Dwyer," and hastened forth to meet the guerilla chief, whose cognizance, a helmet crested with a crucifix, and green sash girding his waist, even more than his lofty bearing, distinguished his person. In company with Miles he approached the sheiling, and Father John, at once recognising the individual whom he had spoken to upon the occasion of the tithe tragedy at Tubber, a couple of days before, hailed him with enthusiastic welcome:

"Since it is become our duty to combat in our defence,

and that of those helpless ones committed to us, let's prove the manhood of our arms in telling blows upon the foe ; but heads to guide and lead with wisdom is our chiefest need, and auspicious is the omen, that of your presence among us in this hour."

"I doubt it not, responded O'Dwyer, in tone of solemn pathos, and with heavily clouded brow he continued musingly : "'Tis but from the collision of such chaotic and adverse elements we may hope to eliminate a living spirit. Nought else can move the inert mass. Blood, tears, wreck, ruin, in a consuming fire, to burn away the dead flesh and probe to the quick the pulse of life, is all our hope for the resuscitation of the diseased body. You have been in critical strait a while since," he added, turning to Miles, who replied :

"'Tis not an hour since we were invested here by an infamous corps of yeomen and military, and have obtained miraculous respite from summary immolation by a successful stratagem of yonder intrepid heroine. Nevertheless, they did not leave us unscathed : poor, palsy-stricken old Mooney is lying dead where he fell, strangled from the shoulders of the walking gallows, Heppenstal."

"Ye-, I know it all," returned O'Dwyer. "My scouts, Neil More and De Lacy, fetched me word of what was doing ; but as Roden's Foxhunters were scouring round in one locality, with Carhampton's dragoons burning and pillaging in another, and Kingsborough instructing his North Cork in the practice of that most diabolical invention of his, the pitch-cap torture, not far off, without rash temerity I could not head my small band to the rescue. When, like Azrael, the destroying angel, they had swept their devastating course, marking their track with fire and blood, I came on ; and now that I am here, what is your plan ? I am myself *en route* to Wexford, where levies are mustering fast."

"Ay, that is best," cried Father Murphy. "Let Wexford be our goal, and forward at once, before our march be intercepted. Nothing like prompt paces in emergency !"

"So be it !" cried one and all, and with simultaneous

action forthwith commenced the stir and bustle of preparation for a long, toilsome, and perilous march in scattered companies, by secret passes best known to the outlaw and the night marauder.

While confounded at the eccentricity of the position in which, without any previous calculation, and, certainly, contrary to the whole bias of his inclinations, he now stood the avowed associate and champion of insurgents and their ringleader, Miles, turning to Father Murphy, said: "In good sooth, I think I shall become a convert to the creed of the predestinarian, and say with him, 'Who's born is listed.' But yesterday I should have mocked the oracle that told me to-day, jostled out of the even tenor of my dull, monotonous life, ceasing to be a cypher, I should be enrolled for battle it was my studious care to shun. Having come so far, who knows but I am predestined the unconscious instrument of some notable deed that shall make men gape and set me on a pedestal, a hero wonder to be stared at and worshipped, a hitherto unrevealed demi-god shining forth in his refulgent glory. Well, if I must have honour forced upon me, *allons!* What will Hugh say?"

"There seems to be ground for your philosophy, Miles," observed Father Murphy, "else would I, an humble priest but yesterday preaching a gospel of peace to the people, be to-day sounding the tocsin to arms, and signalling my obscure self in a manner that, if it hoist me on a niche in the temple of fame, will be tolerably certain to elevate me to the gibbet for the speculation of posterity. Circumstance, you see, is the destiny which, wielded in the hands of the Deity, rules the hour for us all. *Marchons!*"

CHAPTER XXVIII.

LADY CASTLEREAGH'S MASQUERADE.

"Yes, there are sounds of revelry within the palaces,
And the fair castles of our ancient lords,
Where now the stranger banquets. Ye may hear
From thence the peals of song and laughter rise
At midnight's deepest hour."

Vespers of Palermo.—HEMANS.

WHILE the nation thus grappled by the throat was withering in the throes of dreadful agony in the hands of assassins more ruthless than the fangs of bloodhounds, a masked ball, on a scale of unusual magnificence, was being given by Lady Castlereagh to all the *élite* of the metropolis. Within the ample space of brilliantly lighted saloons, presided over by the deities, Terpsichore and Apollo, blended in heterogeneous assemblage a variegated throng, monopolising for the hour, and personifying characters that once had acted their part in the drama of ages: notabilities of every land and station, habited in costume of appropriate magnificence, and representatives of every class, quaintly attired in befitting garb, superbly contrasted by the gorgeous splendour of Olympic divinities. Shining amid the cortege, chiefly inspired by the muses of romance and history, whose partisans disported in reproducing the pageant, and living brief space in the charmed circle of regal court and fairyland, and ill-assorted, too, and strangely antithetical to nature, were some of the prominent actors in the scene. Thus disguised, and bedizened as a Norman crusader, striding through the glittering galaxy, Lord Carhampton, complacently smiling upon Calypso's train in the gay quadrille, and Lord Kingsborough, personating Ulysses the wise and good, seemed no longer the same Lords Carhampton and Kingsborough who had so lately in other scenes, enacting the parts of Tiberius and Caligula, bent their deathful frowns upon trembling peasants, and given

their huts to the flames and their families to slaughter. Lord Norbury, in green tabinet coat with pearl buttons, striped yellow-and-black vest, and buff breeches, depicting Hawthorn in "Love in a Village," pleasantly conversing with Queen Anne (Mrs. Damer) and Queen Elizabeth (Mrs. Guildford Colandisk), looked by far too amiable to satisfy one that all the bad stories told of him were true, and that he was indeed the arch-hangman of '98. And gazing upon the mild, innocent countenance of John Claudius Beresford, in the character of Caractacus, one should do violence to one's faith in physiognomic theory to credit that one of visage so blandly courteous, admiringly riveted upon Juno (Mrs. Pomfret) and Venus (Lady Alicia Luttrell), in train with Mars (Guildford Colandisk), was daily wont to preside over military torture; and that those ears, so sensitive, like Lord Castlereagh's, to the exquisite notes of soul-subduing harmony, could have hourly gloated exultingly upon such discordant keynotes as the cries and howls of mangled victims. Yet so it was, and so far from criticism tarnishing by a breath the reputation of these magnates of their sphere, fame trumpeted their merit from ear to ear. Loyal subjects, brave officers, just judges, accomplished gentlemen! Pious dowagers descanted on their perfections, astute senators courted their favour, youths of condition emulated their qualities, fair ladies smiled upon them, churchmen voted them models of grace; and, serenely approbative of their canonisation, the vessels of election rejoicing in all the outward and visible signs of grace, swallowed contentedly the plentiful libation of unctuous chrism that anointed them within and without to beatitude here and hereafter. While sporting their new ephemeral honours—garish state livery and Union titles for the moment laid aside—Lords Clare, Glentworth, Donoughmore, Lifford, Cloncurry, and Carleton, leaping the chasm of centuries, re-animated the dust of King Arthur, and, lived over again the celebrated dramatic personages, Othello, Macbeth, Saladin, and Mephistopheles. Near a group of Arcadian shepherdesses, seated upon a green bank in an alcove beneath the shade of conservatory blossoms and foliage, with

crooks and flowers in their hands, stood one of the few whose outfit did not jar upon the ideal sense of the appropriate; and Hussey Burgh, in the garb of the Lion of Flanders, silently amused, was watching the antics of Buck Whaley in the farce of a satyr making love to Diana (Boadicea Pomfret), same time interested in following the movements of a masked caliph, Haroun Al-Raschid, who, in company with a prince of Abyssinia, were paying assiduous court to a Doge of Venice, escorting an Irish princess, arrayed in vesture of silvered crepe and gossamer scarf of pale-tinted green lightly draping her sylph-like form, encircled with a zone of starry gems, upon her classic brow an eastern tiara of sparkling brilliants, and on her jewel-clasped arm resting a golden lyre, emblematic of her land of song and story. Hanging about and following in the wake of this group was a domino, whom curiosity had long made unavailing essay to discover, and who, still maintaining stern incognito as he stalked, a duplicate Brutus, baffled every scrutiny of prying eyes to penetrate his disguise, and withstood all the cajolery of speech, sly artifice, and sinister inuendo to beguile him of his secret. As night advanced, and most of the maskers, indeed all, had from time to time cast off disguise, he alone still stood shrouded in mystery, and still the question, "Who is he?" passed unanswered from lip to lip, and whispers began to circulate from ear to ear, not all of a complimentary nature to their object. "A reporter for the newspaper, most likely," said Miss Warbeck Higgenboggan, who, in the rôle of a Duchess of Marlborough, conversed sedately with Mr. Pomfret in the character of a Quaker, and with hard, unrelenting eye, severely scanning the *tout ensemble* of that ungrateful creature, Alphonse Fitzpatrick, whose late advances to a reconciliation having been so coldly received as almost to seem rejected, through the Misses Warbecks' overweening pride suggesting the necessity of keeping up their dignity, and not to be in too great hurry to receive back to favour a chastised culprit, now unfortunately no longer a subject inferior, but invested with all the consequence of a wealthy heiress, independent of patronage or protection, was forbidden by her uncle, the Doge of Venice, to accord henceforth more than the most formal

civilities exacted by good breeding, and commanded to refrain from further overture to those relatives.

"Or a French spy, maybe," cried aloud one of the shepherdesses (Cleopatra Pomfret), looking acutely at Venus (Lady Alicia), who, deserting the circle of the Graces, had led up Mars, to ravish his eyes with the fascinating beauty of the Princess Eva, shining in her sphere with renewed lustre out of the cloud that had temporarily dimmed her radiance, and to keep, herself, vigilant record of the impression still made upon Haroun Al-Raschid (Maurice O'Driscoll), and the Prince of Abyssinia (Hugh O'Byrne), by the magic attractions of the fair Milesian.

"May I hope for the honour of the Princess Eva's hand in the next quadrille?" said Claudius Beresford, coming up at this moment and bowing to his kneebuckle with infinite grace; but with ceremonious *hauteur* she negatived his suit, which Hussey Burgh observing, said:

"Now, Caractacus, beshrew thy wit. Avaunt, barbarian! and when next you sue the Princess Eva, come in guise of Strongbow—most potent of victors—to win and woo."

He withdrew some paces as he spoke, to take a closer survey of the indefatigable domino, still lingering near. While taking advantage of Beresford's discomfited retreat, Venus rushed in, took Alphonse's arm, and peremptorily drawing her away from her uncle's side, and the charmed gaze of O'Driscoll timidly yet earnestly rivetted upon her, while Hugh and he chatted with Don Antonio, she contrived to launch her among the shepherdesses, and seat her beside Guildford Colandisk, whose haunting presence she had, from the outset, been studiously avoiding. Unabashed by shame, undisturbed by conscience, alive but to the sting of self-reproach, and remorse for the folly that had betrayed him to forfeit a now intensely magnified fortune, and bind himself to a hated yoke that incessantly galled him, yet cherishing the hope that somehow he would redeem his disaster, and make all right again, Guildford, seating himself beside Alphonse, whispered in a gay, off-hand sort of manner:

"We're both out of place, by Jove! *Malheur moi!* the whole thing has been a blunder from beginning to end;

but Fortune is such a fickle jade there's no knowing how to hold by her slippery skirt. Now, had you but come to-night as Juliet, and I hit upon Romeo, would it not have been more analogous to our unhappy fate?"

"I don't understand you, Mr. Colandisk;—pray let go my hand," coldly replied Alphonse, nervously shrinking away, and turning to address Lady Alicia, seated at the other side.

"Dear Alphonse!" persisted the amorous Mars, nothing repulsed by her calm aspect of settled indifference and cold tranquillity of demeanour. Cutting short the exordium, she rose abruptly, and returned to join her uncle.

"Peevish, petulant little thing!" sighed Guildford. "I fear I shall have much to do to restore her to good-humour; I did not think she was so pettish. How beautiful she looks!"

"Prosperity has quite turned her head," observed Lady Alicia, in the same undertone. "I'm sure I did my best to patronise her, and place her upon a footing of friendly intimacy with us. She declined all confidence, showed no disposition to avail of our civilities, and huffed at some little playful badinage of Carhampton's. She stands aloof upon her dignity; but never mind—if you're not a fool, Colandisk, persevere; I never knew a flirt but was vanquished in the long run. Just now I can see she is spreading her net to entangle that silly fellow, O'Driscoll, and that other mammoth, Hugh O'Byrne; but—keep your hold, and don't let the eel slip," she added, rising, and approaching a group habited in various guise, and whose animated conversation was evidently not meant to be exclusive.

"The pikes were found this morning somewhere near a rivulet that runs through the demesne by Hobson, Jenkins, and Stubly, who searched for them upon the information supplied by Higgins to Major Sirr," exclaimed one who personated Rhadamanthus, in reply to Lord Carhampton, who had just doffed his crusader's helmet to say to a parson in *propria persona*, standing beside Miss Fanny Higgenboggan, arrayed as a German margravine:

"'Pon my life, reverend sir, I must say 'tis monstrous, you ministers of the reformed Church are so ineffective in your

office as to suffer us to behold, in this eighteenth century, a people as heathenish and mutinous as they were in the days of glorious Queen Bess, and long before. Why, look ye here, Lamb, there's not a bog-trotting priest can't lead—lead the multitude by the nose to Hades, or where he will; and you, parsons, with the artillery of the glorious constitution to back you, can't drag the helots to their knees—how is it?"

Lamb, wincing beneath the fiery rebuke of the fierce-browed warrior, made deprecating response: "'Tis truly inexplicable, my lord; the manna of the word seems powerless to sweeten the marrow of their bitter hostility;—and doubtless they are predestined to perdition."

Here an auxiliary, in the person of lively Sardanapalus Pomfret, bounced timely to his patron's side: "We have done our best, Lord knows, with the stubborn wretches, to cram the Bible down their throats, and make them, *volens volens*, swallow and digest wholesomer food than the ubiquitous, beastly potato; but I insist that you, gentlemen of the army, to whom is delegated the duty of smoothing the minister's path over the thorns of the vineyard, have not done your part through too great toleration, for which you have incurred the censure: 'Cursed is he that doeth the work of the Lord negligently, otherwise deceitfully.' Pray, my lord, have we not Scripture to show us that toleration is not acceptable to the Lord?"

"Faith, I can't boast I've made Scripture much my study," said Lord Carhampton, smiling upon the self-conceited young parson; "but if you tell me I've Scripture to back me, I'll pay up arrears with interest and good-will; albeit"—he darted a glance, void of benevolence, at a venerable-looking minister close by, in conversation with Sir Ralph Abercrombie and Sir John Moore, in the characters of Philip of Macedon and Pyrrhus—"it may please the philanthropic Berwick, in the excess of his sympathy with the rebels, to impugn our zeal."

"Laxity term it—laxity and weak pandering to human respect," said Parson Lamb, fearlessly bending deprecating eyes upon him whom his patron held as a very Mordecai in detestation, quite defiant of the austere gaze of Sir Ralph

Abercrombie, and the wrathful one of Sir John Moore, the latter of whom said, pointedly :

"Had but one out of ten of our churchmen the true Christian spirit of the philanthropic Berwick, or one out of ten of our military leaders been endowed with one grain of common human feeling and wisdom, it were not fated us to behold to-day the woful spectacle of a nation plunged into the horrors of insurrection and war."

"No," chimed in Sir Ralph Abercrombie, tapping the lid of his snuff-box, "anything so deplorable as the condition of the unfortunate people trodden down under the heels of the Orange ascendancy, and their dogs let loose upon them, is, I can aver who have witnessed it, without a parallel in the world. No man's home, family, or life is his own. What's the meaning of it, my lord?—what is the drift of this exasperation and butchery of the people?" continued the veteran, addressing Lord Castlereagh, who, in the character of Achilles, came by with Lord Charlemont, as Atlas.

"'Pon my honour, Sir Ralph," smiled his lordship, satirically eyeing, with expression not conspicuous for agreeability, the obtuse-witted soldier, "there be abstruse mysteries in which I should lack ability to initiate dunces : nor can I explain how it is that some spirits be so unruly ; it taxes all the canons of Church and State to exorcise and lay them in the Red Sea."

"Fie-fie, Sir Ralph," here interposed Lady Moira, who, in chat with Alphonse Fitzpatrick, Don Antonio, Hussey Burgh, and O'Driscoll, was standing near ; and a malicious twinkle in her eye spoke of caustic irony ready to sting ; "how could you expect his lordship to throw open the doors of the cabinet, and interpret State policy to public comment ; come to me, who am Witch of Endor"—her ladyship represented the character—"and I will read you, by sign and sigil, the Book of Fate. Acting by counsel of the Oracle"—she turned and looked significantly at General Lake—"Lord Moira has removed his library and valuable effects from his northern castle to England, so that vindictive private malice, under cloak of loyal zeal, public good, calamitous necessity, unlucky accident, or a thousand

other reasons large as plums, shall find no more than bare walls upon which to wreak mighty wrath, ha! ha! ha!" And she laughed merrily, in derision, as she thus took the opportunity to acquaint the General that his threat to burn down Lord Moira's splendid mansion had been, so far, frustrated in its object by the timely removal of the property it contained. While, with cheeks glowing between shame and rage at the exposure of his malignity, the officer sneaked aside, Lady Moira continued, alternately smiling upon Lord Castlereagh and her circle:

"Government is very candid; it disguises nothing; those who run may read its designs. Lord Clare made it understood that half a million of money had been placed at his disposal to buy votes for the Union. Didn't Macdonald say he should have five thousand guineas for his vote? 'Tis part of the programme, those who won't sell must be coerced into surrender. Hence, resisting they are rebels, and rebels must be crushed in blood. So poor Clonmel died last night?" she added, adroitly shifting the subject as she noticed a red blotch disfiguring the brow of the Chief Secretary. "I hope he had a tranquil end, poor soul!"

"And that he saw a minister," put in pious Miss Higgenboggan, inserting herself into the coterie of which, with envy that brooked no longer dalliance, she saw Alphonse Fitzpatrick make one. She looked as she spoke at Hussey Burgh, who, challenged to polite rejoinder, said:

"Among many vices, one virtue his lordship had. He was not hypocrite enough to affect faith, which he had not, in the ghostly service or benefit of bishop or parson. As he lived so he died. Defiant of their ministry, and more intent in edifying posterity by leaving behind him a fair reputation, he spent his time, instead of reciting prayer for mercy, in burning papers that might have compromised his honour with the world. So let him rest."

As Hussey Burgh spoke all eyes were attracted, and all attention was arrested by some sudden commotion in the lower end of the crowded saloon.

"What is it?—what has happened?" exclaimed several

as the buzz and hum rose loud and louder, and swaying crowds pressed round Lord Castlereagh, who had been beckoned away by a sign from Sir Chichester Fortescue, just arrived from the Castle. But soon, very soon the tidings spread, waking pale dismay and consternation round. The long-impending storm had burst, the apprehensions which had made the preceding day an anxious one for the citizens of Dublin, changing the city into an armed garrison, and compelling the judges to appear in military uniform upon the bench, proved to be no chimera. Couriers, jaded and breathless, had just arrived with news that the insurgents were up, that the Belfast mail had been attacked and burned at Santry, the Athlone at Lucan, and that from Cork at Naas, upon which place the enemy was concentrating in large force.

"Lord, defend us! what'll become of us?" cried Mrs. Pomfret, staring wildly upon her interesting brood, male and female. "Toby, my dear;—where are ye, Toby?—d'ye hear?" she screamed to her husband, strutting about in the drapery of a mandarin! "We must fly to England, at once. The rebels are up, and no one can tell the end of it. Go down at once and secure our berths in the Holyhead boat. Oh, dear Mr. Burgh! what'll be the end of it?"

"The sacking of Dublin, of course, my dear madam," smiled Hussey Burgh, gently disengaging his arm from the nervous grip of the excited lady. "You do quite well to seize time by the forelock, and effect prompt escape from proximity to peril."

"Cook's soul! but it's fine news," vociferated Lycourgu Pomfret, the ensign. "Now we'll see some fun, and make strides up the ladder. What I'd give for a squint at Captain Rock. I take it he's the leader."

"You monster! how can you speak so, and we in such panic? Men have no sensibility in their nature," tittered Alicia Luttrell, giving him a little rebuking stroke with her fan, and casting a sidelong glance at O'Driscoll to observe how he took her sportive coquetry with the cadet—or could she discover any jealous apprehension of a rival. "But who is their leader Captain Rock?"

"Some say he's one, some say he's another; but I say he's the man in the moon," grinned Lyourgus, charmed at his own wit and the condescending affability of Lady Alicia together. "And I shoot nearest the mark."

"Should your surmise be correct we are in worse plight than I had deemed," said Maurice O'Driscoll, regarding the youth with countenance more indicative of drollery than envy, "seeing that if the demi-god be enthroned so far beyond our reach, our hope of pulling him to his knees is moonshine also."

"I say," wheezed Lord Norbury, waddling into the circle, with glossy, rubicund disk, "the gallows will solve the problem one of these days, and introduce Captain What-d'ye-call-him to us in *propria persona*. Egad! I'm glad the rebels are up. Now we'll have some pastime and business on hands." He rubbed his own complacently.

"By Jove! the very thing we wanted, an opportunity to demonstrate our valour and loyalty, and rid the land forever of the aborigines," exultingly cried Lord Carhampton, stealing an underlook at Maurice O'Driscoll, whom he knew was wont to boast of his Milesian lineage; but Maurice, at the moment rapt in the beatific vision and absorbed in *tête-a-tête* with Alphonse Fitzpatrick, took no heed of the shaft which flew idly by.

Lord Kingsborough supplied the void, exclaiming, with bosom elated as that of the carrion crow or vulture scenting slaughter: "By George and the dragon! we'll immolate whole hecatombs! We'll show as many scalps as Sioux warriors, and convert the land into a necropolis!"

"Nought else may avail save the wholesale extermination of this perplexing people," observed General Lake, with grating harshness of tone. "It has been the wont to laud Cromwell's policy and determined measures in the country, but I for one dissent from the general panegyric. Why did he leave a plague-spot? why did he give the noxious refuse of the sword a choice between hell and Connaught, to creep out again over the land and infect it as with leprosy. See, if the ordering of things fall to me, if I don't make cleaner work. Cock's bones! T!!

sweep so clean the race of Paddy shall become extinct, and his memory be as a myth in the land !”

“I’ll be down on the Curragh to-morrow with my Fox-hunters,” said Lord Roden, “and sweep it like a hurricane. If man, woman, or child survive my onslaught, you may exhibit them as gifted with charmed lives.”

“I’ll lead the chase with my bloodhounds,” harked in Lord Beresford ; “and if we don’t outgo Pizaro, Herod, Nero, Holofernes, and all the celebrities of fame in deeds of havoc, call me a jackal. Ouns ! we’ll have a free country to live in, or die !” he added, with bombastic peroration.

“Meanwhile, what’s doing ?” demanded Sir Compton Domville. “Lords Castlereagh, Tirowen, Enniskillen, Portarlington, and a lot more are gone off to the Castle ?”

“Time we be at our posts,” said Lords Carhampton and Kingsborough, navigating themselves through the throng, followed by Lords Roden, Beresford, and General Lake, Colonels Skerret, Le Hunt, and L’Estrange, Major Lombard and Colonel Walpole.

“Colandisk,” whispered Buck Whaley, laying hold of the young man, who, acting upon the suggestion of Lady Alicia, in accordance with his own wish, had tacked himself to Don Antonio’s party, much to the annoyance of Alphonse, “who is the domino lounging about and so pertinaciously maintaining his *incognito* ? Have you any idea of who he is ?”

“A baboon, I wager,” returned Colandisk, contemptuously, and with so little reserve of caution that it reached the ear of its object, who, facing sharply round, confronted him, saying :

“Be more guarded, friend. Baboons sometimes carry clubs.”

While Guildford, taken aback, stared dumbfounded, the *incognito* vacated the spot, pursuing in the wake of Hugh O’Byrne, about whose skirts, not unobserved, he had hung the whole evening, dogging his steps from place to place with a persevering patience that finally achieved its aim.

Straggling apart, as if by accident from the concourse, when a more sequestered space was gained, Hugh wheeled

about, and accosting the domino, abruptly exclaimed: "Shadow o' me! you've been pretty constant. May I know to what purpose?"

"Hugh O'Byrne," responded the domino, in solemn accents, "ruin and woe track thy steps yet more closely; and what dost thou, loitering the hours big with fate, where the misery of the wretched decks the banquet of the oppressor? Through peril and difficulty I've adventured hither to warn thee to thy post. The country is in arms. Miles your brother is in the field with your kinsmen of Ballymanus, and Byrne of Cabinteely is in the hunters' toils. Pikes hidden by Government agents have been discovered on the demesne, and are suborned in false witness against him. His doom is sealed. And thou, Hugh, wilt thou yet stand aloof or follow me?" The speaker lifted his mask, and, with a shock of terror, Hugh O'Byrne recognised the features of one whom a hundred myrmidons of the law, eager as bloodhounds for the game, were after in full hue and cry, even the notorious Wicklow brigand, highwayman, and outlaw, O'Dwyer of Donard.

"Madman!" he ejaculated, with involuntary recoil of horror, then seizing his arm: "Mask," he cried, "and come along." Stealing a fearful glance on every side, he hurried him forth. In silence they made their way through swarming guards, lacqueys, grooms, porters, chairs, carriages and all the confusion of a motley concourse, seized upon a chaise standing for hire, and drove off at speed to Hugh's lodgings in South King-street. Here, secretly ensconced from the world without and all its prying eyes, in a small, dingy chamber, lighted with a pair of mould candles, and presenting a dismal contrast to the sumptuous hall whose glare yet dazzled their senses, the two occupants, seating themselves, thoughtfully yet eagerly surveyed each other. Hugh was the first to speak:

"How, in heaven's name, Michael did you penetrate through the battalion of Major Sirr's spies, who infest in droves every quarter of the city, from the purlieus of lanes and alleys to the saloons of aristocratic mansions? It was a desperate venture—heaven send us well out of it!"

"Amen! It was a desperate enterprise, Hugh; but

when all is at stake, what else was left? I could not risk a letter, I could not trust an envoy. But speak, for brief is my sojourn. You have heard the tidings—what is your purpose? No mid course is now open to you. In what ranks will you stand—with Erin or her foes?"

"Go to; go to, man! If it come to that, can you doubt a moment?" returned Hugh, as, fired with animation, he gazed upon the excited O'Dwyer. "You heard the speech of Roden, Beresford, and the pack to-night, and need we further argument to stimulate our spirit? I'm glad Miles is with us, but grieved to the heart for what you tell me of Byrne of Cabinteely. It will go hard with him, I fear.

"So be it! I for one bemoan not, nor reek what goad may spur a cold-hearted braggart to zeal in patriot cause. Odds my life! it pleasures me to see supine cyphers drummed into action. But come, Hugh, let's be stirring before the dawn."

"Tarry a moment; I've a friend here I would take leave of, and charge with my adieu to another friend whom I left behind at the ball," said Hugh, rising.

"Ay," nodded O'Dwyer, "the priest I saw when I called in quest of you, and who directed me where to find you. Do go wake him up and get his blessing, while I turn my masquerading gear, and assume a new character, even that of a reverend parson intent on tithes and converts."

CHAPTER XXIX.

THE PLOT DEVELOPS.—PIKES FOUND ON ROBERT BYRNE'S
DEMESNE.

"Upon those heights Olympian
I proudly take my stand,
To rescue from oblivion
The traditions of the land ;
In page of faithful story
To record Ierne's woes,
And the downfall of her glory,
And the triumph of her foes."

EMELOBIE DE CELTIS.

MEANTIME, while convulsions shake the land, and Demos-thenic eloquence thunders in the senate, and bewildering pageants grace the fair metropolis of the Isle, apart from each busy scene of political strife, war's alarm, and pleasure's festive-hall, dwelt in the peaceful retirement and elegant seclusion of his mansion of Clare Hill, sheltered amid sylvan bowers on plains of Arcadian beauty, the noble lord of all, happy in the love of a cherished wife, beautiful children, faithful dependents, and a limited but devoted circle of chosen friends, simple, dignified, unostentatious, amiable in deportment, unimpeachable in character, studiously interfering with none, and guardedly prudent in the expression of his sentiments, Robert Byrne of Cabinteely, surrounded, as he moreover was, by a phalanx of connexions of the ascendancy principles, whose interest in the State was by no means insignificant, might well be supposed to enjoy immunity from those vicissitudes that harassed less favoured individuals, and to stand far beyond the reach or the thought of those traffickers in blood and spoil, the infamous bastard progeny of bastard aliens of foreign race, that now overran and deluged the

land. Not so; the eye of cupidity, as we have seen in preceding page, looked upon the fair heritage of the Catholic gentleman, saw it was good, and covetous bosoms forthwith concocted subtle schemes, and fertile brains soon devised engines and machinery to enable rapacious hands to rend away to their own possession the ancient property of an inoffensive neighbour. All unconscious of the impending ruin looming near, Robert Byrne, just convalescent from a severe and protracted fit of gout, which had confined him some weeks to his chamber, was lounging, wrapped in morning-gown and slippers, in a cushioned chair before a fire in his study, with a small table, upon which stood a writing-desk, with paper &c. beside him. Near him, with his back to the fire, and the skirts of his coat tucked under his arm, was a tall, slight, muscular man, in the uniform of an English officer, whose features, finely chiselled, and aristocratic, yet hard and stern, wore a shade of deep gloom. Between the two, but nearer to the window, apparently gazing abstracted upon five or six children, including her own, playing upon the lawn, Madam Byrne lingered awhile, sadly musing. Presently her husband's voice, again speaking in subdued tone, broke her reverie, and riveted her sharp, fiery eyes upon his less perturbed countenance.

"I protest, Gregory, I feel like a man in a dream," said Mr. Byrne, addressing his cousin, Captain Byrne, of Broomfield, in Bray. "To think of such an audacious charge brought against me—and worse, that I could have an enemy capable of such villainy. What have I done to provoke the wrath of any man to such a pitch?"

"However, that's not the point; and it won't do to dream or speculate over it, Bob; you must be stirring, and take active measures to counteract a most nefarious scheme, upon whose issue is staked your property, reputation, liberty, nay, it may be your very life," returned his kinsman, with vehemence. "I take in the whole thing at a glance: obscure starvelings, emulous of notice and greedy of plunder—Sirr, Swan, Reynolds, Sandys, and others—having failed to extort from the people about evidence against you, have taken upon themselves to manufacture a

web whose flimsy fabric determined energy and prompt measures on your part may flitter to rags ;—but you must be alert.”

“I can do nothing till I see Day, for whom I’ve sent to talk it over with him and hear what he says,” returned Robert Byrne.

“Here he comes, Robert, and two or three other gentlemen—one, I think, Hussey Burgh ;—yes, Hussey Burgh after him, riding up the avenue,” exclaimed his wife, with heightened colour, seating herself upon a chair, from which she rose again as Judge Day, who was on foot, entered, followed by Hussey Burgh and two other personages, who were strangers to her, one an elderly man of pleasing aspect, the other a vulgar, red-faced, pugnacious, withal jovial-looking man, who carried pencil and paper in his hand, and stared about in a hard, business-like kind of manner, that might be only likened to an auctioneer taking an inventory.

“Well, Bob, what’s in the wind?” brusquely cried Judge Day, after the usual ceremony of greeting had been carried out among all parties, seating himself opposite his friend and wiping his face with a silk handkerchief, while Hussey Burgh, and the gentlemen with him, took up positions indicated by the lady of the mansion, and with eyes indifferent to all else, and replete with anxious interest in his reply, centred upon Robert Byrne, who did not keep them long in suspense, saying, as he nervously poked the fire :

“I take it you’ve all heard the news—it spread like wildfire—about the pikes?”

“Yes,” said Judge Day, sagaciously shaking his head ; “bad business. When were they found?”

“This morning the servants brought word that a lot of fellows, scaling the demesne wall after midnight, ripped up the ground near the brook and got them.”

“Well, Bob,” returned the judge, slowly taking a pinch of snuff ; “’tis very awkward ; you’re in a quandary, and no mistake. How will you prove your innocence ?”

“My well-known loyalty, I should think, will be my best defence,” coldly responded the other.

“Not with parties interested for private motives or ends

in believing you guilty, Mr. Byrne," said Hussey Burgh, with significant glance; "you must demand open trial, and employ first counsel in the case."

"Just so," returned Judge Day. "Why didn't you affix your name to the loyal address presented by the Lords Fingal, Southwell, Gormanstown, Kenmare, and others to the king? The omission, you see, has placed you under ban; or why not have had your name enrolled in some of the militia corps? Better do it at once. But, upon my veracity, I don't see how we can help you in this strait."

"But I do, Mr. Judge, asking your pardon," cried the red-visaged personage, bluntly, delivering himself with a broad brogue. "My name's Egan. At my friend Burgh's request I've come down here with him to offer my service to get you out of a hornet's nest, and to save the fine old estate from being made pasture land for swine. Now you comprehend what I mean when I speak in parable?"

Robert Byrne's heart swelled with grateful emotion, yet his eyes looked more thanks to each friend than his lips expressed. The second stranger meanwhile said:

"I also take this opportunity, sir, to introduce myself as Don Antonio M'Mahon de San Luis, and in poor requital of a gallant kinsman of yours having saved my life and entertained me hospitably in his house, to make you an offer of any service in my power to render."

Robert bowed. "You allude to my relative, Miles O'Byrne?"

Don Antonio made gesture of assent, and Judge Day resumed:

"Where are Miles and Hugh at present?"

"I know nothing of them," said Robert. "Though I had no reason to mistrust their loyalty, yet I did not like their friendly intimacy with Lord Edward Fitzgerald. I feared that soon or late their principles might not be proof against seduction, so alienated myself in great measure from them: they took umbrage at my wary caution, and so we severed."

"But," rejoined Hussey Burgh, "I am cognisant of the fact of which I now admonish you, sir. It has been re-

ported at the Castle that Lord Edward Fitzgerald had been received and entertained by you at Clare Hill."

"Lord Edward," returned Robert Byrne, with the distressed and irresolute aspect of a man lost in a labyrinth, and groping his way through paths entangled by quagmires or infested by snakes, "twice visited me here. Upon one occasion that he called Lord Talbot de Malahide dined with me. I invited his lordship on that occasion to join us, which he did. Again he called and lunched, or dined, I forget which, with some friend of his; but I never went to Frescati, or returned his visits, so determined was I to keep beyond the sphere of his influence."

Here stepped forward Captain Gregory Byrne, who had up to this listened with silent indignation to the cold, spiritless defence put forward by his pusillanimous kinsman, who, in the nervous dread of compromising himself or others, restricted himself to mere negatively rebutting charges against him, and justifying himself by feeble admissions, and explanations derogatory to his dignity and detrimental to the exercise of a subject's charter of freedom of action in all legitimate matter. Haughtily drawing up his tall figure, and sternly envisaging Hussey Burgh, Captain Byrne spoke, sharp, decisive, and free from the smallest tendency to tremor or hesitation. "My kinsman, Mr. Byrne," he commenced, apologetically. "has been lately suffering from severe illness, hence the prostration of strength of mind and body that impedes his grappling with this business in the manner it requires. Now, sir, assuming my relative's permission, I shall take upon me to carry the war into the enemies' camp, and put them upon their own defence."

Hussey Burgh and his friends smiled approbatively.

Captain Byrne proceeded with the imperturbable, methodical air of a man aware of his ground, and inflexibly bent upon worsting his opponents and carrying his point: "Lord Edward Fitzgerald, the unfortunate ringleader of a deluded party of would-be patriots, naturally desirous to augment his band with reinforcements to the popular cause, and pardonably judging from reminiscences of our family's old prestige, that not vainly should he appeal to one

holding the position of representative of a race ever inimical to oppression and tyranny, boldly came undisguised in the open light of day, announced his purpose, and besought us, in the name of our bleeding country, to league with him and all true men, for its rescue from worse than helot bondage. Need I recapitulate his arguments and his failure to engage us in his wild enterprise. He withdrew incensed, and perhaps excusably anathematising the decay of heroic spirit in modern time. But, sir, in the train of Lord Edward came also others—men in outward semblance, fair-faced, smooth-tongued—jackals in lions' coats, emissaries of Government in patriot guise, ghouls, vampires in human form, ambushing to snare, intriguing to entice the victims whose blood should furnish the banquet upon which they gloated in prospect. Did they bear, you may ask me, the patronymics of men? Yes. Having uncloaked themselves, 'tis not even within the power of despotic law, or shame-faced patrons, to invest them in a rag that may conceal the naked deformity of the monsters—Armstrong, Reynolds, Magan, and Higgins—as they stand before the public gaze. These traitors, Castle-deputed or self-commissioned, came hither in the train as I said, of Lord Edward, their princely patron, their miserable dupe. Like him they assailed us with potent arguments for rebellion, each having in view a different end—he, the battlefield, victory, or glorious death; they, the criminal's dock, the hangman's noose, dishonour and spoliation. Well may you believe that when the Geraldine, unsuccessful, proudly withdrew, these, staunch to their profit and speculation, remained, and bringing to bear every weapon—flattery, entreaty, lofty enthusiasm, plausible argument, highflowing rhetoric, ridicule, sarcasm, badinage, jibe, jeer, taunt—to stimulate our zeal, they sought to trepan us to our ruin. What more? Failing to bend our invincible mind, cased in armour of wisdom, to their insidious aim, what more remained but to fabricate plot and iniquitous stratagem to drag by violence into their meshes the wary prey they could not bait or blindfold? And here I admonish you, gentlemen, that all who lend themselves by connivance, silence, apathy, indifference, or otherwise,

though not overtly, perhaps, amenable to stigma, are nevertheless accessory to, and passive accomplices in, the project of these plunderers!"

"None here," said Hussey Burgh, "I fain believe, are minded to incur such obloquy."

"No, faith! that's not what brought us here," humorously cried the celebrity of the bar, known to fame by the *sobriquet* of Bully Egan, looking well pleased at the signs and tokens of creature comfort exhibited by the stout butler, in answer to the bell rung by the lady of the house, bearing in a huge tray of decanters and glasses and preparing to lay the table for luncheon. "Why, look you here, Byrne, it's a d——d conspiracy to rob you. But don't be down-hearted, friend. I think, with my forensic acumen, you may call me a coon if we don't raise a tally-ho, and hunt the villains with such a pack that, if they don't make for cover, Pluto will have them the sooner—much good may it do him! Why, look you, by the bones of Sampson!—this is choice old port, smacks of the fruit—if I stood in your pumps, and caught the body of a poacher trespassing on my ground, I'd send him to Charon, to ferry across the Styx to hades!"

"There are two of them at this moment, I believe, keeping guard upon the house, that we may not vanish with the smoke up the chimney, or elude them by any sleight-of-hand or necromantic spell," said Robert Byrne, somewhat reassured, and drawing freer breath, as smiling he contemplated the sturdy, self-reliant visage of the lawyer.

"Fetch them before us. Let's hear their evidence," calmly returned Judge Day.

"By'r leave, judge, one at a time. Don't infringe upon my jurisdiction, I pray you," excitedly rejoined Egan, making sign to the butler to send in one of the men, who soon after, shuffling, snivelling, and quailing before the inquisitorial eyes fixed upon him, appeared on the threshold.

"Come forward, my fine fellow, and let us bask a moment in the light of your volcanic countenance, and hear with ravished ears the dulcet tones of your mellifluous voice," cried the lawyer, facing round to get a good view of his

object, who, combining the bravo and the coward in wavering balance, sneaked on a few paces, and paused irresolute. "So, what's your name, deponent?" queried the investigator, pencil and paper in hand.

"Billy Cody, yer honour," snuffed the fellow, wiping his nose with the cuff of his coat, and looking round askance at all.

"That's a nice name," grinned Egan. "Looks well on paper. Your sponsors were people of taste. I daresay you own a pedigree? Could you favour us with an account of your grandfather?"

"I dunno, yer honour. I heerd as how my grandfather's father kem to Ireland wid Cromwell in the ould times."

"Indeed! and left your father and a lot of interesting orphans keepsakes in it after him. What a scurvy fellow! So then you are of noble English race, and despise all connection with the mere Irish, whom you would gladly help to exterminate for your own good and the good of the country. Well, let's see if we can help you; for, though I'm of the mere Irish myself, some of us have not hesitated to court favour by immolating our own flesh and blood. Who found the pikes on this rebel's ground, Billy?—Lucky dog, 'egad!"

"Myself, an' Stubby, an' Hobson, an' a lot of us," grinned the informant.

"Good! How did you know they were there?"

Cody, somewhat posed, hesitated, then made answer: "Jem Pollock tould the Major, an' he sint Jinkins an' the rest of us to search, an' so we got 'em."

"Dear me! How many were there; did you count them? What a lynx-eye Jemmy has—worth fifty silver spoons in the mouth;—such an eye!"

"Yis, yer honour, we reckoned two hundred."

"Lord save us! Were they old or new ones? Wish I had your luck!"

"Spick an' span new from the forge, yer honour."

"Think of that! Had no rust or blood upon them? Never were in use before?"

"Not a sign, yer honour."

"Just tell me this—was the earth fresh or green over them? Pity we haven't Norbury down!"

"As green as a leek, yer honour."

"Humph! so they must have been buried some weeks. I wonder they weren't rusted. That will do, beauty; you may go for the present. Conduct him, John, and let's have the other chap; but take care they don't speak."

"Never fear, sir," responded the butler, lugging away with scowling brow the obnoxious informer, and soon returning with a yet more ill-favoured specimen of the *genus homo*, and ushering him into the presence.

Egan, after surveying this witness for a few moments, tackled him in a new style: "Tom Stubly, is that your name, friend?"

"No, sir; Dick Shaw," responded a drawling voice, while two furtive eyes peered from deep sockets at the questioner."

"I'm glad of it. Richard Shaw, Esquire, will sound so much better than Tom Stubly. Did you hear that Jemmy O'Brien is to be knighted, and be subsidized with a handsome salary for his last job? Lucky fellow! What fine treasure-trove these pikes are! Egad, I think I'll take up the trade. Pays better than defending culprits. One haul makes a fellow's fortune; but sometimes mars it, too, as these treasonable gentlemen may find to their cost, when they walk out of their estate, and loyal, honest folk like you, Billy Cody, Sirr, Swan, Reynolds, and others of the true blue walk into it. Pray, tell me, friend, how many pikes had the rebel stowed away?—Nice rods in pickle for us and the Government. Just caught in the nick of time."

"Why, sir, there was a cartload of 'em. We couldn't count the lots," frankly returned the informer, beguiled by the confidential manner of the lawyer; and, in the belief that he was a Government agent for the prosecution, also dazzled as well by the specious innuendos of guerdon, he did not look upon either fallacious or incongruous with the merits of State satraps.

Egan proceeded: "In what condition were the weapons—old or new? Blood-stained, of course?"

"Mixed of all sorts, sir. Some brand-new ones, an' some ould rusty ones, an' some had bloodmarks on 'em."

"How did you know the exact spot where to find them?"

"Bekase, sir, the earth wor fresh over where they was burri'd."

The lawyer paused a moment, as if in perplexity, then said in doleful whisper: "But do you know, Dick, for all our cleverness, I fear 'twill go against us on the trial. One of the fellows that Higgins procured to bury the pikes has staggered, and unless we can choke or gag him the whole thing will fall to the ground, and we have our labour for our pains."

"Which of 'em, sir?" eagerly cried the alarmed fellow, stooping his head close to the lawyer, who whispered back:

"I bet you ten pounds you don't guess, and I'll pay down on the nail if you do. There!"

"Was it Billy Cody, sir? No, in coorse, it warn't him, if he's to have a piece of the ground. It was Harry Toby, the villan."

"The very one!" shouted the lawyer, hilariously. "Hip, hip, hurrah! fill your glasses everyone to the health of Harry Toby. You may go, Dick; we have evidence to prove that you, Cody, Toby, and others of your associates, at the instigation of parties we know, aided and abetted by Higgins, buried yourselves the pikes in this gentleman's ground; by-and-by you will tell us how much you got for the job; at present go out and have your dinner in the kitchen.—Where are you off to, judge?"

"To order my carriage to go to the Castle," said Judge Day. "This business must be laid before the Viceroy and Chief Secretary. Bad state of things when the lives and properties of gentlemen, peaceable, well-disposed, and holding good positions in society, are at the mercy of ruffian speculators. Why, it might be our turn next to be honoured by their notice." He glanced ironically at the deponent, who, nothing abashed, but evidently bothered, looked daggers at all parties, and growled:

"But yer goin' to pay us the ten pound, anyway; I'm

not goin' to be done out of it ; an' I let out nothin' ye can take a houl't of."

"Yes, yes, all fair in the way of trade," made swift response the jovial lawyer, smacking his lips again after a glass of Madeira. "Genuine vintage that ; I'll score it off with you, my honest friend, when the fruit ripens, and I fetch home the price from market. You understand what I mean ?—when the fees come for my having lent my service to transport a kishful of rogues next session to Botany Bay. That will do. Go ; you have my word, which is good as my bond ; and pray for me, that's a good fellow, I knew you would—ha ! ha ! ha !"

Fulminating maledictions, hearty and earnest, upon himself, the company, and the world in general, and upon the tantalising man of law in particular, and consigning all indiscriminately to the bottomless pit, the baffled informer withdrew, while in jocund mirth the relieved party addressed themselves to recruit their spirits at the hospitable board, seasoned with pleasant converse. Judge Day, who had been peremptorily arrested and detained for luncheon by Robert Byrne, while the butler had been despatched with a message for his carriage, seated himself beside the lawyer, who, turning towards him the full moon of his visage, glowing refulgent with wine and satisfaction, politely addressed him :

"Now, sir, what d'ye think ? Didn't I wheedle them ?"

Everyone laughed. The judge, solemnly helping himself to some lobster salad, bowed acquiescence.

Hussey Burgh spoke out : "Why, so accustomed were we to know you by another *sobriquet*, it took us rather by surprise to see you bloom out in the new character of a wheedler. Pray, doff the old patronymic, and be henceforth known as the multiform divinity, Proteus by name."

"What ?" vociferated the lawyer, his ignitable Celtic temperament catching fire at the accidental friction, and exploding as half in jest, half in earnest, he retorted upon Hussey Burgh, on the *qui vive* to extract material for fun out of the effervescence of the spirit floundering in the misty vapour of the libations he had been taking in : "is

it change my name you're at me, Mr. Burgh, and take another? Faith an' I won't, for all your *clish-ma-claver*; and you that's so long naturalised in the country—all as one as of the old stocks—ought to know better than to propose such an act of tergiversation. Why, sir, I'm as proud of my name as if it were a crown of gold upon my head;—and why wouldn't I? Show me a finer name in the universe than Egan, derived from Eneas of Troy, and the great Ugain More. Ay, you may laugh in your sleeve, Judge Day, at our ancient glory as though it were all balderdash; but we know better. The Irish, sir, that your ignorant countrymen affect to look down on and despise, are the nation nearest to the root of Adam: ay, nearest of the branches we are to the root of the old tree whose foliage covers the world; our language of majesty, poetry, and love, is so old that like the few hairs on a hoary head, it is well-nigh worn out with age, and no one recognises in the now wrinkled features trace of the regal beauty that once adorned the empire; its royalty dawning in the East, like the sun, having attained its meridian splendour, waned and faded into twilight, racked with storm, blurred with rain, and obscured with night-clouds, through which twinkle, shoot and glimmer miserable mimic meteors, yclept stars, *inagh*! aping the magnificence of the departed Persian, Assyrian, Babylonian, and Chaldean glory. Where be now ancient Carthage, Rome, and Greece? Who should have heard of their existence but for Scriptural records and domestic archives? And, by my troth! had they had Danes and Saxons, more destructive than Vandals and Visigoths, to deal with, as was our fate, no fragment of history had survived to tell of them at all: their name had been a myth, their antecedents a blank. By St. Comegan! I was travelling on top of a coach last summer with a thoroughgoing Englishman, a broad, thick-set, goggle-eyed, clod-headed, self-sufficient specimen of the soil, who says to me, after infinite labour on my part to jog him up into life, and extract something beyond a grunt and a groan out of his plethoric brain and torpid bosom:

“‘Lor, you Hirish be loike folk wot 'aven't yer tongues

fixed toight in yer jaws ; they do go loike the wheel of a miull.'

" 'Lor,' made answer I, 'it be the fault of our brains, which are so full of quicksilver it must needs brim over into our tongues, and set the unruly members a-going.'

" 'Aw!' gasped Bull, awe-struck. He thought it as bad a case as that of the fellow whose wooden leg ran him to death, if ever he heard the story. After a pause, having fished up an idea out of the stagnant pool, he dangled it in triumph as follows :

" 'Umph, oh, um! Pity, sir, these 'ere Hirish caunt appreciate the foin advantages they deroive from their connection with us, an' leave off the row they're makin' 'ere.'

" 'Humph,' quoth I, 'the fog's clearing off. Pray, friend, let's hear your exposition of some of the advantages that I may answer you.'

" 'Whoy,' returned he, 'there's our trade an' commerce, wot must enrich the country, not to speak of the boon of civilisation and relidgion. Just think of wot it wor, I hear our pawson say, before our hintercourse after the Conquest—wild, naked, without 'ouses, without harts, without hindustry. Whoy, Pawson Maw told my woife, who's a Scotch-woman, an' takes hinterest in noose, that when our King Henry——'

" 'Which of them?' demanded I.

" 'Wall, caun't say exact, there wor so many of 'em ; but the Conqueror doined in the city of Dublin : you had no 'ouse fit to entertain 'im, an' 'ad to run up a tent in the fields. Hisn't it plain the country was in a rude, barbarous condition.' (It chanced we drove at the moment by a fine old abbey in ruins and a round tower.)

" 'Open your eyes, Mr. Saxon,' says I, 'and you that know Irish history so well, give me an account of yonder ruin and that round tower?'

" 'Oh, yes, quoite easily,' returned the erudite John, eyeing the fabric with *nonchalance*. 'Hireland is full of them tall, circular buildings, said to be temples of the heathen foire-worshippers, an' the ruin beside it is the remains, I

was told, of a Popish monastery, founded by one of the Irish chieftains about the time of St. Patrick.'

"'Are you sure of that?' queried I.

"'Lor, for certain. My brother-in-law, Cooke, who's a pawson too, is a fine authority on all such matters,' cried my innocent informant, with as much vehemence as if he anticipated a flat contradiction; whereas mildly I responded:

"'Now, my good fellow, I have you in a pit. Awhile ago you told me that the Irish before the English came among them were naked, rude, ignorant, without arts, or religion, or industry. See yonder that other imposing ruin, the castle of a Thomond chieftain? Pretty spacious house it must have been in its day by what the remains show. Now common sense tells us Danes or English could not have built them a thousand years before they were or had ever set foot in the country; but so soon as they came, the uncivilised Dane and the civilised Englishman, they applied themselves with indefatigable industry to the ignoble task of dismantling these fine edifices, mementoes of our greatness and their own littleness; and if Henry your king found no place in Dublin—the stronghold for more than a century of the Danes ere they were expelled from it—fit to entertain him, pity he didn't, by some seer, send word of his intended visit; he wouldn't find one to-day, six centuries later, for miles on the Curragh of Kildare, so long in possession of his countrymen, or fifty other places I could name. Doubtless our chieftains, too, had not timely notice of the honour vouchsafed them by a monarch of Britain, it being their wont to entertain strangers, not to be entertained by them. Unfortunately upon this point they were divided in opinion, some slighting royalty that could demean itself from observance of etiquette, others admiring the condescension, and partaking of the hospitality so dispensed. Now, sir, what more have you to say?'

"'Dunno,' yawned Bull, weary of the lecture, yet putting out his horn, reluctant to yield. "It can't be a thriving or prosperous country that hasn't manufactures—and you had none."

“ ‘Hadn’t we?’ quoth I, in scorn. ‘We dyed our skins, like the ancient Britons, with woad, did we?—and went cool and comfortable in our light garment in summer, ah, ha, ha! But that wouldn’t do in winter; and being addicted to luxury, we contrived to fabricate tissues to our fancy. In the reign of Edward III. we exported superior woollen cloth, our own manufacture, to England. In, and centuries before, the time of St. Patrick, our nobles were habited in vesture of fine linen, and many-coloured silks, wrought at their household looms, and the people were comfortably clothed in plain stuffs, the work of their own hands, not now as in rags you see them. So sumptuous and plenteous were our garments that Kilkenny Statutes, incited by jealous envy, made foolish essay to restrain and stint its abundance and magnificence. Show me, sir, a parallel for that in the world; and as for other arts and sciences in which our Phœnician fathers excelled, bringing to perfection here the knowledge they had acquired and carried with them from the fountain-heads of old world lore and craft, the manufactures and dyes of Tyre, the gems and gold and silk of Asia, cabala of Egypt, the alembics of Arabia, the craft of many empires, the traditions of all, to be reconstructed and fused into the focus of a new kingdom, to enrich and adorn it—all this our latter-day invaders have scattered to the winds. Go, seek for some relic escaped the wreck in the museum of the antiquarian, and brag no more of our present nakedness, which is your disgrace.’ ”

Having exhausted his theme, and volubly poured from an eloquent tongue, rendered yet more loquacious by the stimulating virtue of generous wine, Bully Egan made abrupt peroration of a subject that never tired, and was sure to be expatiated on when audience and occasion favoured, and by sudden *detour* reverted to the momentous subject of the day:

“This will make a sensation, egad! Lively jackdaws; we’ll tar their feathers so they won’t fly again, I warrant. Norbury will be glad of it;—always is in good spirits when he has one or two hanging cases in hand;—he’s pious, you know, and feels he has done a good job in ridding the

world of knaves, and so helping his quota to reform and fit it for the abode of blessed spirits."

"He will have no need," said Hussey Burgh, deliberately peeling an apple and looking at Egan, who stared hard in turn, and said:

"Why, of course he will! Byrne here will prosecute for conspiracy to libel and injure, Day will back him up at the Castle, and I'll haul 'em up at the court. See if we don't noose them."

"Now my eyes have been opened; I know enough of Castle politics," said Hussey Burgh, slowly, and stroking with gentle hand the head of a child that had climbed upon his knee, "to be able to admonish you that Judge Day's interference will meet with but small attention. No *exposé* will be suffered where so much is at stake, and so many ugly transactions, criminating parties enjoying Castle patronage and immunity for every villainy, sure to transpire and be unfolded to public comment. No; Mr. Byrne may be thankful if, holding his rod *in terrorem* for the present, he may escape further molestation; but, parodying the speech of Mark Antony, I would, considering the crisis we now are in, address Mr. Byrne, and say that were this estate mine, and I Mr. Byrne, there were a Mr. Byrne who would go abroad and travel for a year or two till the storm blow over that menaces so rudely, and so elude the birds of prey hovering around his nest."

"Mr. Burgh, I quite coincide in your opinion," cried Madam Byrne, delighted at the suggestion. "After the narrow escape which I suppose we may consider ourselves to have had, it were madness to risk further stay. Robert, we must go at once somewhere, and the change will do you good. Clare, don't be teasing Mr. Burgh"—reproving the child, who was fumbling to get out his watch and seals.

"I shall have no objection to travel for awhile, my dear: and indeed I think it's the wisest thing we could do," observed Robert Byrne, contentedly smiling at Hussey Burgh playing with his child at bo-peep. "My nerves are quite shaken by this untoward event, and, as you observe, a little change will benefit me."

"For all that, I'm going to the Castle," said Judge Day, standing up. "I've no notion that Camden and Castlereagh should feign ignorance of the deeds that are doing under their nose, and let them know that if these fellows come off scot-free under their ægis many more innocent have been hanged."

"Yes, that may not be amiss," said Hussey Burgh. "I say, counsellor, what did you do with your English fellow-traveller—did you convince him of our Irish claim to Britain's homage?"

"Oh, the lump!" roared Egan, annoyed and out of temper at the idea of a case promising such prolific redundancy of fruit to be abandoned, the stage whereon his forensic talents were to shine, and crops of laurels to spring up, being cut from under his feet, "I dropped him somewhere. D'ye think I bribed the incubus to stick to me? I hope he's found a bed in some bog-hole, swampy, dark and silent like himself: but more likely he'll turn up in some snug quarters—these mammoths always do; they've an instinct that draws them to good pasture. So, Byrne, you'll be fool enough to let the finest case that ever man stood upon fall to the ground for want of pluck to see it out? 'Pon my life, I'm sorry for you, sir; 'tis a tamo spirit to brook wrong. Why, look ye, were I in it, my blood would not disgrace a lion. Get up your courage, man; quaff down a bottle or two of good liquor, and then let me hear you speak. I once went to school some forty years ago, and remember hearing of a fellow that recommended good sherry and was loud with encomiums of sack. Pish! the *omadhaun* was Saxon, and never tasted our mountain dew. Booh! mark me, sir, if you would infuse into your soul the fire of Hector, and ignite in your brain and heart the wit and courage of all the gods from Jupiter to Hercules, be devout to the fount of Bacchus, whose essence is nowhere to be found out of our own Green Isle. Our elixir, doubt it not, is the nectar of Olympus, the milk and heart's blood of heroes. Come now, Don Antonio, whom I spy making grimaces yonder, what have you to depose against my client—oh, bother! favourite beverage, I mean;—how words a man is used to slip out unawares!

What can you allege or bring up to disparage my plea or impugn it?

"Heaven preserve me from any such vain conceit as that of pitting my weak argument against any case you champion, Mr. Egan," smiled Don Antonio; "far less the hardihood of criticising the merits of a subject you extol in such terms of hyperbole. No, sir, theme more to the purpose, just now, prompts me to endorse the opinion of Mr. Hussey Burgh, and go yet a step beyond him in the counsel he gives which, if Mr. Byrne permit me to speak, is this—that were this estate mine, with a hundred more to add, nought would tempt my sojourn for a day in a land so trampled down, so afflicted, so abandoned to the despotism of a lunatic oligarchy, and the discretion of an alien government, more profligate, unprincipled, absolute, and inhuman than the potentates of the earth's most enslaved regions—never! Transferring my estate, if entailed, to whatsoever next heir might deem it an equivalent for bartered independence, and hold it by the precarious tenure of a patron's good will or pleasure, amassing all my portable substance, I would fly the desecrated soil, to seek and find, in the transatlantic world, a home I could call mine own, and in salubrious climes, untainted by the curse of a blighting tyranny, breathe the blessed atmosphere of liberty, and feel in every pulse and nerve a free man."

Robert Byrne was not by nature an irresolute character: he was timid, cautious, provident, calculating, but not weak or vacillating. He would, to a certain extent, yield to the voice of prudence dictating compromise, but at a certain point, when principle must be asserted or cast overboard, he could be firm as the rock upon the seashore, buffeted by waves and tempests. Impartially and calmly as each pleader made his eloquent appeal, he weighed the *pros* and *cons*, then sedately spoke:

"You have all, my friends, kindly interested yourselves in my regard, and honoured me each with your respective views—each in degree of comparison good, better, and best. To Hussey Burgh's, as coinciding more completely with my own judgment, I assign pre-eminence and give

my adhesion. What would it avail, Mr. Egan, that we bearded a powerful castle junta, and achieved triumphant victory, by dragging into the light of day hideous things engendered in darkness, and laid bare the complicated mechanism of State politics, woven within the secret labyrinths of the Chief Secretary's tortuous brain, but to render ourselves obnoxious to future malice, or objects of hostility and dread, to be annihilated by certain vengeance? Then, as for Don Antonio's suggestion, there is one impediment which, could I reconcile myself to sunder all those ties so dear—of kindred, family, olden associations, country, &c. &c.—and found a new home within the transatlantic hemisphere, which should yet influence me potently to reject it, it is this: It may be heaven's will yet to bless me with a son, to whom I would then feel myself responsible to transmit, in its integrity, so much of the ancient patrimony as has escaped the wreck of spoliation and plunder, and through more than two thousand years of vicissitude been handed down through lineal generations, from father to son, a sacred deposit to me for mine. Hence, adopting your counsel, Mr. Burgh, I shall order immediate preparations for speedy departure to some quiet haven of rest, till happier and more auspicious days permit my return, and peace shall be restored to the convulsed nation. Pray, fill your glasses and drink to our hope."

In silence the gentlemen complied all, and, conversation renewed, glided into other topics still bearing upon the events of the time, till the visitors rose to depart, and the grooms brought round their horses.

CHAPTER XXX.

THE DEMENTED CHILD.—A RESCUE AND REPRISAL.

"I doubt it not,

The spiritual world
Lies all about us, and its avenues
Are open to the unseen feet of phantoms
That come and go, and we perceive them not,
Save by their influence, or when at times
A most mysterious Providence permits them
To manifest themselves to mortal eyes."

GILES COREY OF SALEM FARM.

THE plan proposed by Dwyer, and seconded by Father John Murphy, of conveying the fugitives to Wexford, though judiciously arranged, was soon found to be impracticable of execution. Neil More the tinker, with one Ulic M'Cormac, despatched to scout, soon returned with unwelcome tidings, that the whole district between them and the secret passes they had hoped to reach, were overrun by the Yeomanry corps—the Humewood Horse scoured the Wicklow boundaries, Lord Roden's Foxhunters* swept Kildare; and that day, parading the streets in riotous disorder, bearing articles of clothing apparel on the point of fixed bayonets, were heard furiously swearing: "We are the boys will slaughter the Croppies to-morrow at the Curragh!" Four hundred of the Armagh Militia, with one hundred of the cavalry regiment of Ancient Britons, under Lord Gosford, were encamped at Naas; and on the Wexford and Carlow side, Beaumont of Hyde Park, Ram of Gorey, the Earls of Courtown and Mount Norris, White of Middleton, Hunter Gowan, and others, lined the country with a cordon of bloodhounds. Keen

* So called from their fine horses.

upon the scent, and hungering like ravenous wolves for carnage, hemmed in on every side by those ruthless foes, it was finally decided to abandon for the present the design, and, while scattered and secreted in the wild, couched by night in the heather, perished with cold and famished with hunger, and mainly supported by what scanty rations were, through toil and difficulty, provided by Dwyer's foragers, and the casual depredations of Lacy, O'Brien, Mooney, and Neil More, they lay awaiting a favourable opportunity to move. Dwyer took advantage of the moment to make his way up to Dublin, as we have seen, and, successful in his project, to return thence by Kildare, for the purpose of communicating with William Aylmer and other insurgent chiefs, and obtain their counsel, and, if possible, aid in the present emergency. William Byrne, meantime, by the advice of Miles, returned to Ballymanus to bide there the issue of events which every hour precipitated with awful prognostics, and Father Murphy withdrew again towards Enniscorthy, to watch the proceedings of the troops, and take advantage of the first auspicious occasion to send couriers with tidings to his friends to set forward on their route.

* * * * *

Far remote from every other habitation, poorest and most wretched of the wretched hovels of the land, stood on the outskirts of Kilcullen, almost hidden from view within a thicket of hawthorn, matted with luxuriant growth of blackberry, eglantine, and dogrose, and almost obscured beneath a pall of ivy that drooped above and around from the gray walls of some ancient ruin, an humble sheiling, whose whole extent was comprised of one miserable room, upon whose earthen floor, and damp, mouldering, black roof and walls, festoons of mildew hung rotting, and whose sole furniture, revealed by a splintered door and a casement of one broken pane stuffed with some rags, was a litter of heath beside a black, fireless hearth, and a little stool, a small three-legged pot in a corner, a rickety deal table, and a couple of noggins standing in the middle. Peering through the gloom, one might discern the two sole inmates of this

hut—a young woman, whose comeliness of feature and symmetry of form neither the aspect of utter neglect nor the grimy tatters that scantily arrayed it could disguise, but, by contrast even seemed to render more apparent, and a child of apparently about five years of age, though in reality seven, whose singular beauty at once riveted and fascinated the eye of the beholder. A strange-looking child, too, she was—strange in appearance and demeanour. A child, yet unlike ordinary children; eccentric, yet not imbecile; silly in speech and action, yet with a wonderful aptitude to say wise things betimes, and an expression of precocious sense and intelligence beaming like a strong light out of her dazzling, dark eyes, and shining like a reflected lustre upon her high-arched brow, rising white, serene, and almost spiritually transparent and intellectual beneath an unkempt mass of dark, soft tresses, tinged with hue of ruddy gold. The history of these solitary denizens of the wilderness was brief but sad. Meelan Conroy had been the happy wife of a comfortable small farmer, in Tipperary, quiet, industrious, inoffensive, and respected. Yet, a Papist, and nephew of a priest of the parish, he was marked out for the hatred of a rancorous Orange crew. No charge was brought against him, no warning given. He was called one night to his door, and shot dead upon the threshold, his house pillaged, and his wife, within a month of her confinement, was scarcely rescued and carried off senseless by two faithful servants, lingered long a helpless invalid dependent on precarious charity of strangers, then, with her baby in her arms, she wandered a mendicant upon the highway, unfit for labour, unfit for work, till in this sequestered spot she settled down, weary of wandering; and now more calm in spirit, more collected in mind, she addressed herself to earn for herself and little one a livelihood by making brooms and baskets from the inexpensive material which she gathered in the fields, and occasionally hiring herself out to help in the country work of haymaking, binding corn, weeding gardens, and sometimes, though rarely, assisting in farm-houses, when press of work needed supplementary hands.

It was about nine o'clock, a.m., and the young woman,

who had evidently just come in from some outdoor occupation, betook herself with some sticks and a couple of sods of turf, which she carried in her apron, to light a fire, upon which, soon as it blazed up, she set the pot with some potatoes for the morning meal. The while, seated upon the heap of broom—their bed by night—the child, yet more naked than its barefooted mother, looked on with roving eyes, smiling at vacancy, and after a few moments it clapped its hands gleefully, and set up a wild, thrilling, musical laugh of ecstatic delight, and the whole of her countenance became irradiated with rapture.

"What are you laughing at, Faochea *macushla*?" quietly demanded the young mother, who was too used to the ways of her child to be startled, and blowing up the fire with her praskeen apron.

"Ma'am, when will we go?" returned the child, coming over and twining its arms coaxingly round her neck, and looking eagerly into her eyes.

"Go where, *m'alaban*?"* demanded the mother, kissing the cheek pressed to her lips.

"To that purty place, *matair*.† This isn't a nice place we're in, an' these ain't nice clothes we have on."

"God help ye, poor innocent!" murmured the mother, sorrowfully rising, seating herself on the stool, and taking the child in her lap. "She hasn't the sense to know why we shouldn't be in a fine house, and wear fine gear, like some that she sees. What will become of you, at all, my lamb?" Then, after gazing a while upon the little one, now listless and dreamy, she said: "I've to go a long way to-day, *aroon*! for a job I've been promised; and will you be lonesome agin I come back with a cake to you?"

"No, ma'am," responded the child, brightening with a look of happiness; "they'll come and play with me."

"Who'll come and play with you, *alanna*?"

The child waved her hand, and looked up into the air, then softly whispered, with a mysterious solemnity that sent a thrill of awe through the mother's bosom: "The sky children."

* My white swan.

† Mother.

"Is it the angels ye mean, *dheelish*?"

"Yes, the little ones; they come and play with me."

"And what play do ye have, *maohree*?"

"They come down an' float about me, an' I strive to catch them, an' they float up, up away; an' then I run after them over the fields, an' they hide under the bushes, an' among the flowers; an' sometimes they lay their weeny hands upon my head; an' sometimes they cover me all over with themselves; an' their breath is as sweet as violets; an' they never let me be lonesome."

"Lord save us!" thought the mother; "the child is fairy-struck." But she continued: "Do they speak to you at all, *alanna*, and what do they say?"

"They speak to me like music in here"—laying her hand on her breast—"and they sing glad songs so far away ye can scarce hear. They want me to go home with them; ma'am, why don't we?"

The mother shuddered, and almost quailed before the searching eye and pleading voice; then she said: "*Marourneen*, you must show me where they live, and we'll go. Is it in Squire Jacob's big house, or with the children in Mr. Jackson's grand place?"

"No, no, ma'am, we won't go there," cried the child, turning away her head, with a look of impatience. "They ain't like them; they ain't got no beauty, and can't run about in the air with the sunlight on their faces; an' what they wear isn't like woven colours of the flowers, an' joy in their looks, an' music in their voices: it's them I want, the purty star-children."

"Well, *aroon*," said the mother, putting down the child to strain the potatoes, "it seems to me ye'll have to wait to go home wid yer company when God calls ye: we'll have to wait till then, *Fanchea*."

"Will it be soon, *matair*?" cried the child, straying to the door, and standing at it.

"*Maisead*! * I can't tell you, *asthore*." †

"What's He waiting for, ma'am?—ain't we ready to go wid Him?"

"We must die first, *acuwishla*."

* Well.

† My treasure.

The little one, seemingly puzzled, gave over the dialogue, and, at her mother's call, returned to her breakfast at the table. There was an interval of silence; then slowly peeling a potato with her fingers, again the child spoke:

"Ma'am, don't go abroad to-day: stay at home wid Fanchea. *Atair* bid me tell ye."

The mother looked up surprised.

"If I don't go an' get some work, *deelish*, Fanchea will have nothing to eat, nor herma'am—wouldn't that be bad?"

"Anyhow, *matair*, yer not to stir out; *atair* bid me tell ye, or ye'll be sorry."

"Why, *aroon*, where did ye see yer father, and how would you know him?"

"*Och*, I know him very well, *matair*, an' he's standing in the sunshine at the door, to take care of us, he is; an' he's looking at us out of his two sunny eyes." And the little girl laughed, nodded her head archly at the door, and gave a little bound, while her mother gazed dejectedly, yet half-mystified, upon the fair innocent, whose words awoke strange emotions and thoughts in her heart, musing and doubtful whether she should obey the warning, and forfeit a day's wages, or treat it as the silly babble of an idiot. She sat still ruminating; then, as an idea struck her, she abruptly said: "What have the angels for their breakfast, Fanchea?"

The child set up a shout of laughter, as though the question had been one of the most utter absurdity and said:

"They want no breakfast; they ain't like us;—but, oh, look, mammy!" she cried, laying down the half-finished potato, and gazing intently upwards with wondering and pathetic eyes. "Look at all the big an' little birds flying through the dark storm; and, oh, mammy, kites, an' owls, an' vultures following an' killing 'em, an' some have their wings broken, an' can't fly no more; *och, orra, orra!*"

"*Huist!*" exclaimed Meelan Conroy, raising her hand to warn the child to silence, and standing up in alarm, as wild cries from without smote her ear, the cries of young voices in distress. Nearer and nearer they came, then crackling of brambles and brushwood, and the tramp of

running feet announced that someone flying headlong from pursuit approached the hut.

"Cross o' Christ between us an' evil!" murmured the young woman, with blanched cheek and lips, "what'll become of us?"

"Don't be feared, mammy," said the child, with beam-
ing eyes. "*Atair* is watching at the door, an' won't let us be hurt." Reassured by the singular faith suddenly inspired by her child's confident assertion, Meelan fear-
lessly hastened to the open door just as the two boys, Ned Burke and Larry Doyle, rushed breathless in, crying with chattering teeth and white faces:

"Hide us! hide us! the yeos are after us."

"Good Lord! my poor children, where'll I hide ye?" cried Meelan, glancing desperately round the one bare room, rushing to look out, and flying back as six or seven troopers, hallooing and bawling, came galloping on high-mettled chargers over the heath, and through the copse, so near that not even a hare could escape their ken.

"Oh, Fanchea, *aroon*, we'll be soon with God and the angels, and ye'll have yer wish, my jewel. Oh, Virgin *deelish*, protect us now from the power of the Evil One."

"Come, Larry," cried Ned Burke, quickly conscious of the peril in which their presence involved the helpless woman, "let's make another run for it, our staying here'll do no good for ourselves or the poor girls"—Meelan looked so young and fragile as to seem little more—saying which Ned bolted out; but just as Larry was following, Meelan seized him by the arm:

"Stay, *avic*, stay; ye can't escape 'em, and if it be God's will, sure let us all go to Him together,"

"Father won't let 'em hurt ye," murmured the child, in low, cooing tone, that sounded plaintively, and as she spoke the horsemen dashed up, dismounted at the door, and intent upon an hour's evil pastime, they flung the bridles of their steeds across the branches of the trees about, and crowded into the cabin. To lay hold on trembling Larry, fling him to his knees, and with bayonet pointed to his bosom, put him to his catechism, was but the work of a moment.

"You young croppy vagabond!" vociferated the troop, closing round him, while they took a good survey of the other inmates, and so blocked up the door as to bar exit. "Now we have ye, an' by every fiend, if ye don't answer every question we put, we'll tear you limb from limb. Come, sirrah, no blubbering or skulking, but speak out. Where's the other chap was with you?"

"I don't know, sir," sobbed Larry, quite unnerved by the late terrible scenes of which he had been witness, and wiping his eyes with the sleeve of his jacket.

"Ye don't know?—ha, ha!—that's a good one," grinned one of the troopers, winking at the bundle of heath in the corner, as much as to say, "if you don't know we do." "But see, lad, your life depends upon your words. Where are the rebels gone away from the cabin they were in the night before last?—we saw you and the other boy among them."

"They wor afeared the soldiers would come back, sir, an' they scattered everywhere among the hills, an' wherever they thought would be safest."

"Was the rebel Miles Byrne among them, and is he with them now?"

"I seen him an' Mr. Gerald lavin' the place among 'em, but I dunno where they wint to, sir," said Larry, getting more composed.

"Where were you and the other chap going when we met you?"

"We wor out, Ned and I, lookin' for a sthray goat an' kid, whin we seen the Humewood horse comin' down, an' we run for our lives, an' met yer honor comin' up at the turn of the road, an' thought to run off by another way to hide from yees."

"Ah, ha, ha, Hawkins, see how a guilty conscience makes cowards," cried a ferocious-looking fellow, whose enormous head rested upon an inch of neck, which alone separated it from a pair of high square shoulders, like a gourd upon a hot-bed. "Is that young beauty there your sister, or what?" And with small piggish eyes protruding from their sockets while he gazed with unhallowed stare at the shrinking woman, he wiped with lawn

handkerchief the perspiration from his bloated red cheeks, and the dewlap that fell from his heavy chin.

"She isn't anything to me; sir; I never saw her before."

"So much the worse for you, my lad; sometimes a comely sister has it in her power to court favour for an ugly brother. What's yer name, sirrah?"

"Larry Doyle, sir."

"Larry Doyle!—a bad name. Strip, you scoundrel, that we may write it on your back, so as to know you again when we meet. Or stay, as you look rueful, and I'm inclined to mercy this fine May morning, will you buy our good will with a job?—but first, that we may make sure of your loyalty, say, 'To hell with the Pope!'"

Larry looked up, his whole countenance and bearing underwent a change. Firmly he looked at Captain Bateman; firmly, but meekly, he replied:

"Sir, I'll do anything in my power for ye, but I won't do that."

Captain Bateman swelled and grew livid with rage. "You won't?" His fist clutched the boy's hair.

"I won't; I'm a Catholic, an' I can't say it."

"Listen to the cub, Erskine?" cried the officer, turning to that personage, who rejoined with a smile:

"I suppose he wouldn't say, 'God bless the King' either, to oblige us; it would go against his Catholic conscience."

"No, I'll say that as often as ye like; for Christ commands us to bless those that persecute us," said Larry, transformed into a new character, and exhibiting now resolution as dauntless as his former timidity.

"Indeed!" sneered the captain. "Perhaps you will further oblige us by crying, 'Long live the Constitution, and the pious and immortal memory?'"

"No; that's an Orange toast, an' I won't say it."

"Come, put an end to this fooling, and let the lad know what we will have or his blood!" cried Colonel Erskine, impatiently. "Lad, we want four of the rebel ringleaders. Mind, we can get them without your help; but we only wish to save time and trouble, and test your loyalty, as we

can suffer no rebel to live, no more than a fox, a rat, or any other mean beast. Tell us at once, or bring us to where we may lay hold on Dwyer, the insurgent chief, priest Murphy, and Gerald and Miles Byrne."

"I can tell ye nothin' at all about 'em; an', what's more, I won't. Is it an informer, like the lot, ye want to make me? See if ye can," doggedly returned the boy, looking bold defiance at the troop, who, for a moment taken aback, seemed stupidly to gaze at the speaker, till one who among his corps was known as the "Buffalo," from his uncouth, unwieldy, and prodigious corpulence, growled out, as he turned over and over with his bayonet the heap of broom: "Dang my witals! an there's no' soign or soight of t'other boy. Wot's gone of 'im? He couldn't 'ave lewanted unbeknown to us," roused them from their reverie.

Captain Bateman drew back a few paces, absolutely convulsed with fury, and drawing his sabre, was about to inflict, not summary vengeance upon the youth, but to cut and hack him to pieces by slow process, when a tiny hand was laid upon his uplifted arm, and a tiny voice cried out, while a small beauteous face looked placidly fearless into his:

"Don't hurt the boy. The man behind you is angry, and going to smite you on the head with a lance."

Captain Bateman, a few paces apart from his troop, turned hastily round, yet saw no object between him and the wall. Surprised, he gazed a moment at the upturned baby face, so guileless and truthful in expression as to leave no room to doubt, save that of ocular demonstration, and Captain Bateman never believed in anything he did not see with his own eyes, or understand by his own reason. The object which he did see next, Larry's face, pale, calm, resolute, inflamed his ire. Dashing off the child, he made a sword-thrust, inflicting a slight gash upon the boy's bosom, who yet firmly stood, while his assailant reeled and fell, a hideous, blackened corpse, at his feet.

There was a moment's pause, then a simultaneous rush to lift the fallen man and undo his cravat, to dash water in his face, and chafe his hands and temples.

"Gone, by Jove! an epileptic stroke," cried Sergeant Hawkins, suspending his bootless labour.

"Second fit. I always knew he'd go off like a shot," observed Colonel Erskine. "Drank too freely."

"And grown so stout of late, poor fellow—great pity!" chimed in a young ensign, bending over the body. "What'll we do with him?"

"Leave him there, Pomfret, and we'll throw him across the horse and take him home, or send a cart for him. But meantime, don't let us be balked of our work for this untoward event, and let that cursed young croppy bless the fine escape he had, and snap his fingers at us," cried another trooper of hardened aspect, laying hold of Larry. "Here, Higgenboggan, lay by tumbling the rubbish, and fetch me a rope."

"Oi, that's wot I call doin' it neat. 'Ang up the 'tarnal young plague afore we go, an' leave 'im danglin' for a scarecrow, to warn all evildoers," cried the Buffalo. "Gi' me the end of the cord;—there, fix the noose. Now yer'll see 'ow I'll string 'im up," and the trooper, who, like his *frères*, was somewhat the worse of a morning potation, delighted with the job on hands, began to chuck the cord round the boy's neck. "Well, little one; wot 'ave you got to say to me?" he cried, suspending his work a moment, as the child stood before him with intercepting hand and frightened face.

"Don't hurt him; the man behind is angry, and will hit you."

"Dang it! d'ye think I'm a fool? Clear the way!" shouted the soldier, kicking the child, and bouncing up on the table to insert the end of the cord between the rafters. The frail board creaked beneath the weight, overbalanced, and down with a crash came the ponderous form. His head struck the iron pot that lay upon the hearth with such violence as to smash the utensil, while same moment his own brains and blood splashed on every side.

Without another word, the appalled troopers made helter-skelter for the door, some swearing, some cursing, all astounded. They stared wildly round in quest of their

horses where they had left them tethered. No horses were there ; but instead a cry was raised, and passed from lip to lip : "The rebels ! The rebels are coming !" as they beheld in the distance detachments of men, armed with bristling pikes in front, and headed by men on horse-back making rapidly towards them.

"Face about ! quick march !" shouted the colonel.

But the march soon became a rapid race, as the desperate foe advanced with rapid strides, and the last vestige of them had disappeared before Miles O'Byrne, mounted on his own charger, reined up with his companions-in-arms—Gerald Byrne, O'Brien, De Lacy, Mooney and others—before the door of the humble cot, where Meelan Conroy, with streaming eyes, was pressing to her bosom the gallant but exhausted boy so strangely rescued, while the child, seated in a corner, was singing to herself, in Irish tongue, fragments of holy hymns that filled the hut with low, thrilling, sweetly-warbled echoes, and the corpses of the dead yeomen lay stretched in all their revolting deformity upon the ground. What the while had become of Ned Burke ?

When the peasant boy, in whose veins flowed, pure and strong, the blood of the first Anglo-Norman earl that had left the impress of his foot upon Irish soil—the chivalrous Red de Burgo—bethought of the peril in which his own and comrade's presence, so unexpected and fatal, was certain to involve the inmates of the hut, and with generous promptitude hastened to relieve them, he made a flying leap from the door, and, over-reaching himself, had stumbled and fallen into a hollow furrow, where, among the furze, he lay concealed to recover breath. By-and-by, finding the hut invested, and his companion not forthcoming, he cautiously crept out of his retreat, looked about him, spied the horses, saw among them Tippoo Saib, and without a moment's hesitation resolved to brave all risk to carry off the animal whose loss both his master and himself had silently deplored. Tippoo Saib, not being cognisant of the state of affairs, neighed loudly with joy at sight of the boy whose hand was wont to caress him, and had surely betrayed him and frustrated his plans had his new

owner and minions been less intent upon their evil work. Shaking his fist at the dumb brute, and looking fearfully around, Ned slipped the bridle off the branch, then, emboldened by success, and probably thinking that, as they were now in for it, the more they could make of their business the better, he went round catching the rein of each steed, then mounting Tippoo silently he stole away, till sufficient space was gained between, and then his snail's pace became an eagle's flight.

Miles O'Byrne, stalking, gun in hand, with a bag of game across his shoulder, to the bivouac where the women and children were camped, as he neared it, beheld with astonishment Ned Burke careering towards him from the other side of the hill, mounted on his own charger, and towing along a pack of prancing steeds. The women, hearing the prodigious clatter, rushed out, every one with a child, except Nelly and Euphemia, and huddled about him.

"Why, as I'm a living woman, if it ain't my Ned!" cried Kitty Burke, standing still beside Miles to gaze upon the puzzling spectacle.

Up dashed Ned heated and breathless, but not elate or joyous.

Miles came forward: "I say, youngster, what have you been at—slaughtering a regiment, eh? How did you come by Tippoo Saib?" and with beaming brow he sprang into the saddle which Ned had vacated, and patted the neck of the animal that bounded beneath him.

"Oh, sir, I haven't time to tell you. I want to go see after Larry," panted Ned. "Will you care the horses—we'll want them yet?"

"Where's my Larry? What ails my boy?" here screamed the shrill voice of Moll Doyle, breaking into the circle. "Tell me, this instant, where he is?"

"The yeos have him, beyond at Kilcullen," whispered Ned, in answer to a look from Miles.

"Give me a pike here; I'll go find my boy! Come, Johnny; come, Nell. Let who will follow, a mother ain't goin' to lave her child to be mangled by wolves while she can handle a weapon for him!" and the excited woman

hurried down the hill in the direction by which Ned had come up.

Miles, who had drawn Ned aside, and in brief words learned from him the details of what had happened, said : "I see, Ned, we must, and may as well set to work first as last. The fact is, we are begirt, and may as well fight out of the net." He sounded a shrill whistle, which was soon answered by similar responses from every side. "Go tell Moll Doyle to come up here. The women must keep in the rear, and I don't at all doubt their mettle if pushed into action. I'm only sorry we can't wait for Dwyer himself. But, ho! here come his hillsmen, stout and true, and with good augury we'll go forth to battle."

The stalwart band which, in his brief absence, Dwyer had committed to the command of Gerald Byrne, Miles, and Macalister, his brother-in-law, came along at swift, steady pace, at danger's signal converging from detached stragglers into compact band, variously accoutred, but mostly armed with the formidable pike.

Mrs. Lanigan and Mooney's now idiot wife being left behind with the children and Doyle, helpless and suffering from his lacerated wounds, in their temporary shelter, and guarded by a small, determined party under M'Cor-mac, the peddler, and one O'Connor, a shoemaker, men of ruined homes, and reckless desperadoes, the whole brigade set forward, swayed by one common impulse, and as yet without any purpose more definite than that of rescuing Doyle's son, and fiercely giving blow for blow, if needful, in his cause.

Hitherto we have seen Irish gentlemen ignored and insulted, yet waiving resentful strife, and merging antagonism of race and creed in peaceful submission to fate. We have seen Irish peasants despised and treated with contumely, as something inferior to slaves, in fact, as savages and barbarians of the most abject type, yet patiently, quietly pursuing the daily routine of their class in honest labour, interfering with no one, unobtrusive, in-offensive, herding among themselves, and asking no more than leave to earn their daily meal of potatoes, and live and die in obscurity and peace. That not answering the views

of their alien masters, an unnatural, execrated and execrable Protestant oligarchy, eager to demonstrate the loyalty they pretended to monopolise, and traffic a country in which they had neither prestige of ancestry more ancient than Cromwellian or Elizabethian charter, nor illustrious birth, nor chivalrous fame to enoble and endear them, to purchase English gold, and Union titles, and the patronage of the sleek tiger, Castlereagh, as well as to wreak their own inherent malice; we are now to behold the reversed picture, of a people, goaded beyond human endurance, rising at length, terrible in wrath, and vainly pleading no more for mercy, but appealing by force of arms to compel, from the punishment and fear of their ignoble tyrants, that forbearance they would not cede to humanity's supplicating cry. Now we shall behold peasants transmuted into soldiers, and women, discarding their sex, which secured to them neither respect nor honour, nor exemption from violence, metamorphosed into amazons, seizing pike and brand, and marching brave and fearless to do battle in the ranks of their kinsmen for children and helpless friends and relatives, whose existence and safety depends upon their strong arm, and the might of their womanly love.

Truly, a grand national crisis is at hand, and, though victory could not hope to be wrested by the most heroic essay of an undrilled, unequipped, ill-armed people, unprepared in every way for the contest. Nevertheless, they who sowed the wind soon reaped to their cost a whirlwind they had little recked of, and too late learned again the salutary lesson, that "a despised foe has often given a bloody battle, while many a vain-glorious house and family was given to deplore the ill-fate of many a hopeful scion and vauntful hero, who never returned from the battlefield to claim meed of applause for his valorous endeavour to out-Herod his associates in shedding patriot blood, and fixing one more rivet in his country's chain."

CHAPTER XXXI.

THE BATTLE OF KILCULLEN.

"Spirits of fire that brood not long,
But flash resentment back for wrong ;
And hearts where slow but sure the seeds
Of vengeance ripen into deeds,
Till in some treacherous hour of calm
They burst like Zealan's giant palm,
Whose buds fly open with a sound
That shakes the pigmy forest round."

"FIRE WORSHIPPERS."

MILES and Gerald Byrne, entering the hut, soon heard Meelan Conroy's narrative of the invasion of her home ; and having cheered poor Larry's throbbing heart with tender condolence, and well-merited encomiums, they gave him into the arms of his overjoyed mother, to be half-suffocated with her embraces, and turned to address the young woman, while their eyes recoiled sickening from the corpses, to contemplate with admiration the beautiful child who, clinging to her side, now stood gazing intently upon them in turn.

"You must leave this place at once," said Miles, "it is no longer a safe asylum for you, and come up with us to the shelter of the hills."

While he spoke, and before Meelan could return a glad assent to the proposal, a warning shout was given by the men on the look-out ; signal whistles flew from post to post, and Miles and Gerald, hurrying forth, met M'Alister hastening towards the direction of Ballymore-Eustace, while cries of "Dwyer, Dwyer ! here comes the captain !" filled the air with wild hubbub. It was even so. Riding, as it were, a steeplechase across the country, came the insurgent chief at break-neck speed, and with him two

or three more equally well mounted, foremost of whom Miles recognised his brother Hugh; but what most surprised him was to behold the party waving British colours, carrying guns and bayonets, instead of pikes, and followed by an uproarious rabble, hallooing, leaping, racing, and brandishing pikes in air, while some, wearing helmets and dragoon's caps, thundered upon a drum, and others carrying knapsacks, rent the welkin with discordant music, lustily blown from clarion and trumpet.

"What the plague is it all about? they look as if they had robbed a camp," observed Gerald Byrne, standing side by side with Miles.

"Or maybe a battle, sir, and they're coming along with the spoil," suggested Ned Burke, feeling privileged in right of his late exploit to make a little free. "An' bedad there's Mr. Hugh," he added, with joyous brow, "carryin' an ensign. I'll go meet him, sir." Calling to two young lads, "Come along, Mike and Dan," he sallied off upon a fleet hunter, late the property of Lycurgus Pomfret, while his comrades followed like greyhounds on foot. More leisurely the others retained their places, till loud cheers hailed them, and Dwyer, outstripping his companions, dashed up, exclaiming:

"Victory! victory! By St. Patrick, we've flailed them."

"Good news, Mick, never more needed! What have you done?" said Gerald, shaking the captain's hand with hearty welcome, while Miles and Hugh advanced to greet each other; and Ned Burke, with glowing visage, no longer shy, unconsciously, in his excitement and eagerness to hear the news, made one of the circle.

"We've drubbed them, beaten them, beaten them out of the field, and scattered them like chaff," cried Hugh, exultingly. "They fell on us at Ballymore-Eustace, Erskine with his buff dragoons living at free quarters upon the people, who rose like one man at our signal, followed us to the field, and swept the route to Naas, where we left them a thousand strong, under Farrell and Reynolds, to hasten to join Dwyer's band up here. Faith, Miles, I'm glad we've been pushed to it, after all."

Miles turned away to address Gerald, who came up, while Dwyer was holding eager *tête-à-tête* with M^cAlister.

"This is a good beginning; what shall be our next move?"

"To stand our ground here," promptly returned Dwyer, who overheard him. "That incarnate fiend, Erskine, when he escaped last night with his life to Geraldine, swore he would not breakfast to-day, himself or his men, till they should breakfast on the croppies of Ballymore-Eustace. Now, he'll have to march through Kilcullen to reach it; he is only waiting for reinforcements to march, and here we'll stand and give him battle."

"Meanwhile," returned Miles, "passing time till his recruits arrive, he has been down here with a pack of his wild dogs in quest of prey. I got back my horse by it; thanks to you, Ned."

"Ay, so I see, and some more beside," smiled the insurgent. "But what are all these women yonder for? I don't suppose we'll need their help, and they'll only encumber us."

"True!" returned Miles, hastening back to the hut, where Moll Doyle, Kitty Burke, Euphemia, and Nelly were seated in divan round Larry, Meelan Conroy, and her strange child, the two latter absorbed in wonder contemplating the phenomena, so wise and rational betimes, anon making strange gesticulations, and holding communication as though with invisible spirits seen by and familiar to her, until Hugh, following Miles, appeared, and then Effie sprang up, and ran joyously to greet him, while he astonished, stood still, and exclaimed:

"You here, little one?"

"Yes, of course! Didn't you know it very well?" retorted the young truant, with air half-abashed, half impertinent, and striving to assume the *nonchalance* of independence before the reproving eye of her brother, who made response:

"I certainly had been made aware of your daft proceeding, Miss Effie, but I was not expecting to find you in this plight. How is it, Miles?"

"Miles couldn't help it," returned Euphemia, irascibly,

and vexed that Miles should be called to account for her. "I came to nurse, and when we were attacked and burned out there was nothing for it but to fly; and if it's to scold us you come, Hugh, I'd rather you had stayed where you were."

"I can tell you, Effie is wilful, and unamenable to authority and advice," said Miles, rebukingly. "I had besought her to go with William to Ballymanus, or even to let Dwyer place her in safety with his wife and children; but she would listen to no argument, and insisted point blank upon associating with our camp followers, and running the gauntlet of fortune."

"Musha, yer honour," here interposed Kitty, dropping a courtesy, "maybe, afther all, Miss Effie is as well off to be among us, seein' the throuble of the times, an' that no house is safe. Shure there's good in company, any way, an' barrin' I wor a hathen, wouldn't I care an' be a mother to the kith an' kin of thim that was good to my little boy."

"Ay, troth!" vociferated Moll Doyle, whose brain did not seem entirely to have recovered the effects of the shock that had agonised it. "What's the good o' livin' dacent an' quiet. Hadn't I two summer flowers, *mochuma*, crushed an' torn, an' left dead an' withered upon their own father's flure? Right ye are, Miss Effie, *aroon agus astore machree*, to stan' along wid us, sword in hand, an' give it *galore* to thim would challenge it. *Och, musha, musha!* 'ain't I got Thady, an' Nelly, an' Johnny, an' my *gossoon* here"—she hugged Larry—"to the fore yit, an' why need I be complainin? Mrs. Conroy, ma'am, may I make bould to ax is that purty *colleen* o' yours quite sinsible?"

"She is sensible, ma'am," meekly returned the young woman. "But I think she's got the second sight, and sees them that we don't."

"Only she ain't the laste like her, she minds me of a sthray child coome to our doore afore the throuble came upon us, an' thin disappeared; an' sure now we know Winnie Daly was right, that it was a *banshee* or one o' the *shuashie*."

Here Miles and Hugh, who had been conferring apart

again turned to the women. Miles spoke : " See, my good souls, by Captain Dwyer's directions we are going to shift our ground a little further ; and it is his wish and ours that, as you can be of no present use, and in no immediate danger, you return at once to the bivouac. If we be successful in our conflict with the enemy you shall have early notice ; if not, we shall fall back upon our quarters, and then shoulder to shoulder, man and woman, fight it out to the last, win or lose."

" But if the Humewood Horse, who are scouring about, come upon us, Miles, what shall we do ?" cried Effie.

" Fall upon them at once, and put them to flight," laughed Hugh, derisively. " Don't show the white feather so soon."

Effie vouchsafed only a glance of scorn at such imputation, and was cheered by an encouraging look from Nelly shouldering her pike, and Ned Burke saying quite seriously :

" I'll be bail, sir, Miss Effie won't be the faintest-hearted among us ; an' I think my mother is as stout as any man. Plaze God, we'll thrash them."

" Good-luck t'ye, *avic*, so we will," returned his mother, quite pleased with the compliment and her son's appreciation of her prowess.

" There's a couple of fellows among us," said Hugh, addressing Ned, and pointing forward with his bayonet. " There you see these two speaking to Johnny Doyle and Mooney ? they joined us on the way ;—their names are Bird and Cole ;—and if all they vaunt of themselves come to pass they will prove a fortune to us, and we shall need but few such auxiliaries to rout the largest army."

Ned Burke looked attentively at the men, who were declaiming and gesticulating furiously, amid an admiring group congregated around them ; but a youth of about eighteen, standing beside him, said quietly :

" I never seen one of these sort of swaggering bullies but whin it coome to blows wasn't arrant cowards, an' the first to cut an' run."

While he was speaking Dwyer came up : " Well, Hugh,

our fellows have rested enough; we may as well get forward; much depends on quick paces."

"Ready!" responded Hugh, mounting the late Captain Bateman's steed, in lieu of the jaded one he had ridden. "There's a fellow wanting to speak to you."

"Well, Duffy?" returned Dwyer.

"Two or three dacint min, captain—Cole, Bird, an' Cooper by name—say that if they had a company apiece to lead they'd be sure to rout, with a handful of such fellows as ours, a squadron of the best troops the king could find aginst 'em, an' I thought maybe it might be well to let you know."

"Cole, Bird, and Cooper!" returned Dwyer; "would they so? Ay, I know the fellows; I saw them in our late affray hanging about the outskirts of the battle, pursuing the wounded fugitives, and cutting short their career. Well, send them up here."

The men came bounding elate and joyous at the summons.

"For heaven's sake, Dwyer, don't entrust the leading of our men to such billygoats," whispered Miles, in haste, as he beheld the trio advance.

Dwyer waived him off, and addressed the jolly-visaged, sanguine party: "My brave lads, you'd be glad to head a company?"

"Just try us, captain, with a couple of hundred, and see if we don't scatter the enemy like chaff. We're the boys 'll lick them."

"Very good! When I see you under my own eye stand fire in the front of the battle, and am satisfied that your mettle is good, I'll promote you. Forward! March!"

"Wasn't that clever, O'Brien?" said Ned Burke aside to the young man at his elbow, as, much amused, the two looked after the disappointed heroes slinking off with crest-fallen, discontented visage, and grumbling at the injustice shown to merit; but the bristling ranks moved on, and the women returned to the bivouac, to bide the issue of events.

Breathing implacable vengeance, immolating in spirit whole hecatombs, gloating upon prospect of carnage, the

commander of the Romney Fencibles and Buff Dragoons, reinforced by additional troops, set off from Geraldine, where he was quartered, to luncheon—he had by this time, changing his mind, breakfasted—upon the croppies of Ballymore-Eustace. A ride of nine miles brought him, with his troops, to Kilcullen. Approaching the fair-green, they discerned bodies of men, in movement, investing the walls of the old church, and immediately spurred to full gallop to come up with them. Dwyer had taken up a good position upon an elevated plateau, difficult to the access of cavalry; and now perceiving the approach of the enemy, his bands, under Gerald, Hugh, and Miles O'Byrne, M'Alister, Holt, Martin Burke, and others, closing in, with pikes advanced, stood to meet the brunt of the onset, three hundred pikemen, drawn up in front and square to stem the serried mass of Britain's embattled phalanx, arrayed in martial panoply, horse and foot, and amply furnished with all the munitions of war. The sun was declining in the firmament, and a blood-red foggy vapour was curtaining his couch in the West, and shining luridly on the helmets and faces of the adverse host, while in shifting breezes their banners waved and flapped, and wild war music brayed and sounded a charge. Stern, silent, and still, the insurgent lines received the sharp fusilade that rent the welkin; then with an awakened roar that drowned the reverberations of vollying artillery, down swept the small, compact host, and, pike foremost, hurled their might upon the opposing lines. Closing in clouds of smoke, foot-to-foot, hand-to-hand, no pause for rest, blows dented helmets, blood spouted fast, bullets hailed thick, pikes hammered like mallets on anvils, crashing shield and corselets, bayonets flashed like gleams of light, lances and broadswords swayed and splintered, shriek, yell, and groan arose from chasms and rents made where the desperate foe, swinging onward, irresistible as avalanche swept by a hurricane, bore down all opposition, broke through rank and square, and left wreck and ruin in their track. Onward, still onward, the heaving, boiling, living mass pushed on: no pause, no rest, no flinching; each pikeman's arm is weary and clogged with slaughter. On, on, the war cloud

is scattering, the dense array is breaking fast. From the outset Miles had seen and singled out Colonel Erskine as fair target for vengeance; now opposed they stood, few lines between. Ned Burke, who fought all through beside his master, with hasty glance at the dark, still visage, rigid with iron determination, interpreted his mind, and with renovated zeal applied himself to aid his design. Right and left their united weapons opened the intervening ranks; Erskine, too, beheld the insulted and wrathful adversary's advancing strides and brandished weapon. Let none impute cowardice to Colonel Erskine; braver men yet than he, astounded and awe-struck at the prodigies of valour that had decimated the British ranks, quailed before the advent of one of the three hundred that had turned the battle-tide, broken the hostile torrent, and whose ominous frown, bent dreadfully upon him, too surely marked him out, and doomed him to untimely fate. With brandished sword, yet still backing his charger from the encounter he fain would shun, the animal lost its footing, and floundered in a pool of stagnant water. Ere he could regain his ground the avenger was upon him. Useless now sword sway, dark, menacing scowl, and vengeful thrust: dismounted and on his back, the foeman is upon him; every opposing barrier dashed aside, the prone, descending weapon mocks his uplifted brand. Uttering wild execrations, and impotently hacking, with delirious rage, at the pike deep in his bosom pinning him to earth, Erskine expired, every convulsed feature retaining the vivid impress of the torture, and the fell passions of a remorseless soul, which had marked them during life. It is to be feared his last frantic speech was not a supplication to the Deity for mercy for his own guilt-laden soul, but an invocation for vengeance upon his enemies. With the loss of their commander a panic seized the British lines, and immediately ensued a flight *en masse* of horse and foot that outstripped even the greyhound speed of the light-limbed insurgents in pursuit. Independently of the wounded, two officers and thirty privates lay dead upon the field, said to be one of the most intrepid and obstinately fought which occurred during the

period of '98, and some spoil fell to the share of the victors.

"Long life to yer honors!" exclaimed a manly voice, addressing Dwyer, Miles, Hugh and Gerald, as, flushed with triumph, they stood together in debate as to their next move. "It's the finest thing was done since we fired the barrack at Prosperous early this morn, and gave the troops a *cead mille failthé* wid the pikes that scored off many a one. Bedad, sir"—he turned to Miles—"ye done a good job in sindin' yon black-hearted *bodach* to keep company wid one to the full as bad, an' that was Captain Swayn, the thievin' villain."

Miles did not know the speaker; but Dwyer exultingly cried:

"Ay, M'Dermod; the scouts brought me early tidings. We laid our train well, and Swayn has been despatched with some of his North Cork bull-dogs to reap the reward of his indefatigable zeal in burning chapels, wrecking farm-houses and cabins, and pitch-capping, picketing, and hanging innocent men. Ho! ho! we'll make them turn over a new leaf, these heroes, before we're done with them. What next?"

"Captain Farrell, sir, who ordered the attack, sint me on to let you know that Doctor Esmond, who was in it, but took no part, has been sent up to town in custody of the Sallins Yeomanry. He might have escaped, if he did as Hickey advised him at the outset, to shoot Griffith the captain, while he made an end of Montgomery, the second in command, an' he wouldn't."

"He must abide by it," sharply returned Dwyer. "They who weakly dally with fate in the very jaws of the lion, and strike no blow in their behalf, must take the consequence. Such pusillanimous spirits, too indecisive to espouse with heart any cause, are better lost than found. No cause aided by them could prosper. What of Dourly of Lallymore? I sent him word by Keiran O'Hart to fall on Rahangan. Aylmer is by this on his way to Ovidstown. We would join them"—he turned to Miles, Hugh, and Gerald—"but that we have decided, on account of the women and children whom we have to convoy, to make for Wexford, to the camp at Vinegar Hill."

"Better adhere to our plan," said Miles. "Those disposed of in safety, we can do battle with free hands, and move unimpeded with brisk march."

"I say," cried the captain, "what's become of Cole, Bird, and Cooper, the stout volunteers, that were to have licked the enemy out of the field? I saw no sign of them in the battle. Where did they disappear to?"

"But I did, yer honour," grinned De Lacy. "They wor by me, an' bolted under fire. They worn't plazed to be put in the first ranks. It was to lade regimints they wanted, the crathurs, an' show 'em how to fight. Anyway, they ain't desarters, for ye can see them from here prowlin' round, an' sthrippin the corpses. I warrant they won't have the least o' the loot."

"Well, let's turn them to some account," said Dwyer. "It isn't likely our scapegoats will endanger their precious necks just now by coming to carry off their slain. Let them be employed to dig a hole and bury the bodies, while we may as well return. Yet no—stay!"—the insurgent chief paused a moment, then continued: "You, Miles and Gerald, go on with some of the men, and await my return at the bivouac. Hugh and I, with some more, will scatter about. I want to reconnoitre Dunlavin. Thirty-prisoners have been brought into barracks there; and but that the town is too strongly garrisoned, not long should be their durance. Forward!—march!"

Up to the sheltered bivouac among the hills marched, in compact file, a hundred and fifty men, called together by the captain's horn, and bearing their own slain in litters to be decently interred, while he, with a hundred and thirty more, set off, dispersed by one, two, and three, to scour the country round.

Arrived by nightfall at their destination, Miles and Gerald learned that tidings had been despatched an hour before, by Father John Murphy, to apprise them of a route now open for fugitives to Wexford, and guides to conduct them. But, in the absence of Dwyer, nothing could be done, and that night and the following day they were constrained to inactive suspense. Meanwhile, as outlaws and rebels, now feasting well upon beef and mutton,

driven from their pasture, and faring more abundantly and better than, as honest, industrious members of the community, they had been wont to do, their only grievance being exposure to the weather and the chilling night-frosts, which even was mitigated by the unusual fineness of the season up to the present.

The ensuing night, however, brought the insurgent chief, with his band considerably augmented; for on that day had been enacted the tragedy of Dunlavin—too well known to need recapitulation here—and numbers, hitherto apathetic, or disinclined to strife, fled in consternation to seek protection in the ranks of the avowed insurgents. Among them they bore in a litter a wounded man, snatched from the murderous onslaught of Saunders of Saunders' Grove, and accompanied by an aged woman—his weeping mother. Dwyer, having been made acquainted with the news, gave orders for instant march, and at the word, marshalling the bands, the whole camp set forward in silence and secrecy, in the midst of a thick mizzling rain, threatening a heavy downpour, to seek shelter beneath the ægis of the national camp on Vinegar Hill. The fine horses taken from the vanquished troops proved, in this hastily improvised expedition, of inestimable value. Euphemia and Nelly, seated upon Tippoo Saib, were conducted by Miles; Meelan Conroy and her child followed upon Captain Erskine's own steed, led by Ned Burke, who had seized the animal for Mr. Hugh; others followed, with children and provisions slung at each side in kishes; then came litters with Doyle and the wounded Prendergast; after these proceeded shaggy roans bearing Norah Lanigan, Mooney's wife, Larry Doyle, and stoutly marching, pike in hand, beside him, his mother and Kitty Burke, both of whom, scouting the offer of pillions, trudged on foot. In advance of the train by half a mile marched Dwyer with the guides, to see that the route was clear. Scouts spurred along on either side, to guard against surprise, while Hugh and Gerald brought up the rear, the whole band armed to the teeth, and even the children furnished with weapons, and instructed, if assailed, to fight for their lives.

CHAPTER XXXII.

FATHER JOHN MURPHY HEADS THE INSURGENTS.

" ushed, thou faint and feeble voice of weeping !
Lift ye the banner of the cross on high,
And call on chiefs whose noble sires are sleeping
In their proud graves of sainted chivalry."
"THE LAST CONSTANTINE."

WEXFORD, the ancient Carman, bounded by the river Barrow on the west, and the woods and mountains of Carlow and Wicklow to the north, intersected by the river Slaney, springing from a lofty Wicklow hill, which sends down on its northern slope its twin sister Liffey, and inhabited mostly by a population of unmixed English descent, boasting succession from Strongbow, and his lion-hearted companions-in-arms, who, with the enterprise of heroes, and the hands of giants, first grasped the province of MacMorrough, colonised, and made it their own. Wexford, sequestered, isolated, and peaceful, blessed with the fruitful comforts of contented industry, and mixed up with none of the turmoil that convulsed the rest of the country; Wexford, the only county omitted by Lord Edward Fitzgerald from his list of counties, because of its Saxon affinities and supposed apathy in the cause of Irish liberty, might, one would think, have claimed exemption from the horrors of strife, a privilege well-founded upon the peaceful demeanour of its people and Saxon predilection to a kindred race. Yet no; the Saxons of '98, themselves a mongrel breed of regicide Cromwellians, Dutch Orangemen, German adventurers, and invaders of every clime and condition the lowest, had no sympathies in common with the Anglo-Normans of the twelfth century, nor education sufficient

to enable them to draw a line of demarcation between the colonists of the Pale and the mere Irish of the aboriginal stock, it was their insane passion to extirpate from the soil. So to work went Lord Castlereagh and his locusts, a countless swarm, distinguished by three classes—first, aristocrats by Cromwellian patent, of spendthrift lives and ruined fortunes, anxious to retrieve their circumstances by contracting for Castle pension and patronage, to do any work, however opprobrious or objectionable, set before them by the Government; second, meanly-born individuals, aspiring to emerge from obscurity into prominence, by hiring themselves to the above-mentioned aristocrats to do those jobs too revolting or filthy for even their unclean hands to execute, and by commission of every act of turpitude, atrocious crime, and unspeakable barbarities, disgusting meanness, and flagrant profligacy, injustice, oppression, and tyranny conceivable only to vilest miscreants, and for the responsibility of all which excesses they were secured by act of indemnity, exhibit their diploma entitling them to office and favour; and third, ministers of the Established Church—needy, rapacious, hungering for promotion, and setting forth their claim by violent denunciations of Popery, and hunting down the adherents of the ancient creed: all these combined loyalists, energetic in the pursuit and discovery of every Popish plot and treasonable scheme to overthrow the British Government, and adept at fabricating conspiracies that might result in good fruit of plunder and confiscation to themselves, by dint of pitchcap, scourge, and rope, picket, fire, and sword, soon informed the Castle of the actual existence of a formidable confederacy of two hundred United Irishmen in Wexford county of a hundred and fifty thousand loyal inhabitants, and immediately sanctioned by proclamation of martial law, was inaugurated a reign of terror, over which presided the deities—Lord Courtown, Hawtry White, Ebenezer Jacob, Hore, Grogan, Hunter Gowan, Turner Newton, Ram, Gore, and others of the infamous pandemonium, under whose horrid auspices the shriek of tortured victims, and the conflagration of peaceful homes pervaded the whole district. Then might be seen bands of informers and

executioners, by night and day, traversing all the country, perpetrating diabolical outrages upon all without their own exclusive circle, and the unfortunate peasantry flying distracted from ravaged dwellings to the concealment of caves, fields, and bushes. But as the ocean has its bounds, so human endurance has its limits, as Lord Kingsborough, with his merciless corps of "North Cork," and his hoard of vile abettors found, when the goaded people, roused into vengeful retaliation, merged terror in wrath, and, like a slumbering lion enraged, bounded from the lair; and while from ten to fifteen cartloads of persons, daily condemned to transportation, passed through the county of Wexford, on their way to Dungannon fort, and the demons rejoiced, and held their orgies amid the wreck and ruin they had wrought, and the wail of mutilated victims, within the narrow limits of the district was concentrating a force which should soon task the prowess of England, under her ablest generals, and grapple with a military force greater than that which in after years sufficed to overthrow the "conqueror of Europe" upon the plains of Waterloo.

Affairs had arrived at this crisis when Father John Murphy, who had seen too late, and lamented the simple trust that had led him to put faith in the "faithless," and counsel the people to a submission that placed them defenceless at the mercy of their relentless enemies, resolving to atone by doing all that now lay in his power for their weal, adopted an opposite course, and flinging himself heart and soul into what he now saw must be a struggle for freedom, a shield to defend, a sword to avenge, a leader to guide, he would go before them to victory or death.

Setting out, on the eve of Pentecost, from his new parish, he hastened upon a good roan to meet the convoy with his old parishioners, and convey them to the place of temporary safety he had provided for them. Owing to the precautions which had been taken, the fugitives and their priest met at the appointed rendezvous, without having encountered any obstruction; and Dwyer, delivering the band in safety to his care, returned with his troop to Wicklow, while *Father John*, riding between Miles and Hugh O'Byrne,

took upon himself to escort them to their destination. Wet, march-worn, and weary, having toiled through the long night over rugged paths, beneath a continuous fall of rain, and buffeted by gusty winds, as though even the elements had combined with their foes against the homeless wanderers, with what joy they beheld the first tints of dawn streaking the horizon, harbinger of more auspicious day, and heard Father John's cheery voice calling through the yet murky gloom :

"Courage, my friends! We have passed the Rubicon, and the goal of rest is near. Thanks to the wild, wet night, those who might, peradventure, have molested or obstructed us did not venture abroad; and we have made a fine expedition of it. After a Mass of thanksgiving in the home of my parishioners, a warm fireside, kindly welcome, and beds and food await you. Push on!"

With many a murmured blessing in response, after a brief halt to change once more the horses' burdens, Euphemia and Nelly now walking on foot, and others replacing them on the pillion, Moll Doyle and Kitty also succumbing to take Norah Lanigan and Meelan Conroy's places on horseback, the procession moved forward. As every pace brought them nearer to their bourne, so wave after wave of light broke through the furling night clouds, and broad and fair shone 'out the clear horizon, and green earth, dripping and shivering from the plenteous bath that had laved her form, now fanned by light, sweeping breezes, but soft. Is yonder lurid gleam mantling the southern sky a reflection of the morning sun uprising in the east? It broadens, it deepens to gory hue, now black clouds ascending from earth in wreathy volumes, dot all the landscape, and light winds, scattering the dense and opaque masses, shroud the vista, as it were, in veil of sable crepe. Anon a cry, a strange, wild eyrie cry, breaks forth in the distance, and is hushed. All at once, as though moved by simultaneous spring, the fugitive train stood still, and an awful presage fell upon the soul of their leader, as he gazed with sealed lips and straining eye upon the portentous omen. And well he might: an unerring presentiment told him that the spoiler had been at his unhallowed work;

that his chapel of Bolubuce,* with the humble dwellings he had destined to shelter his fugitives, were in flames, and their inmates now bereft themselves of asylum. Truly it was so. Saxon and Dane alike have evinced at all times the same taste and partiality for the pastime of ravaging and burning Irish homes, wrecking Irish temples, desolating Irish land, banishing from the soil every vestige of Irish civilisation, and raising the cry, "All is barren." What good can come out of Nazareth? Mere Irish!—Papists—pariahs. "But lift your heads, princes of the isle, your lordly halls are devastated; true, but they gloriously perished in the same wreck with the school and the temple; the daughters of your bowers have been outraged and desecrated, so have been the shrines of the Holy of Holies; but defiled, never!—your heritage has been reft from your hand, and your children cast naked upon the world, even as the seamless garment, woven by a mother's loving hand, was rent away by sacrilegious plunderers from the divine form it had arrayed in becoming vesture, and a sovereign God and Lord of all, naked, suffering, despised, and reviled with obloquy, expired upon a cross. Glorious in the past, yet more glorious in the future, the crown of the resurrection shall be set upon your brow, and your glory shall shine out as the sun in the day of your deliverance.

The chapel of Bolubuce, with twenty houses, had been set on fire in the parish, within whose precincts they now stood aghast, appalled, those weary pilgrims, uncertain whither to flee, wreck before them, danger behind. Every eye bent upon the pastor, who, like a second Moses leading the Israelites through the wilderness, had conducted them so far; while, equal to the emergency, of mind like his frame, vigorous, active, and indomitable, he took in the position, planned and resolved. He waved his hand: "Forward."

And unlike the children of Israel, faint-hearted and diffident, without parley or murmur, resigned to fate, with

* Bolevogue.

confiding trust in him who led, submissively they obeyed his behest. Through a blooming country, silent and deserted as a necropolis, wended the jaded group; but when they had traversed about a mile, a man and woman, breaking from a thicket, in which they had lain secreted to await him, coming forth like frightened runaway slaves, accosted Father Murphy, both speaking together with thick and rapid utterance :

"Ooh, musha; ooh, Father John, we're murdered entirely; don't go on, yees'll be all slaughtered; ooh, *wirra! wirra!*"

"Speak one at a time, if you want me to understand you," cried Father John. "Come, Joyce, say out; what has happened?"

"Och, musha, yer riverence," responded Joyce, 'the village carpenter, whose wife had the care of the chapel, and the tears coursed down his cheeks as, choaked with sorrow, he essayed to speak steadily, "how'll I tell it, at all at all? Yistherday was the day appointed, yer riverence knows, for us to deliver up any arms we had to Mr. Cornock, the magisthrate at Ferns. Well, sir, when we coome there, I had none myself, but I wint to look on. Mr. Cornock wasn't there to take 'em; but the 'black mob,' armed wid swoords an' guns, fell on the people, who turned to fly; howaniver, as they purshued 'em, they had to use the pike bravely an' fight for life, every foot o' the way; and, och, yer riverence, that wasn't the worst, but a lot of the Yeos* set off thin to fire the crathurs' houses; an' another pack coome down an' made for the chapel, where Biddy was puttin' everything to rights agin ye coome down to it. Begorra, whin I seen 'em, I made off to hide behind a ditch; but they got hould o' Biddy, an' axed where you was, and where I was, an' she wouldn't tell 'em; so they dhragged her out, and put her on her knees to shoot her, unless she'd tell where I was, or set fire to the chapel; so thin the crathur, small blame to her, lost heart, and cried out: 'Och, Jack, save me. You wor at yer duty last week, an' are fitter

* Orangemen, so-called by the peasantry.

to die than me ;' so whin I heerd her say that, the heart melted widin me, and I coom out, an' the divils saized me, and wanted me to do the same thing ; but I tould 'em not if it wor to save my life tin times over would I com- mit sacrilige ; an', sure enough, I was a dead man but for Val Mowles, who remimbered I was an ould friend of his, an' bid 'em let me off, and he'd fire the chapel himself, which he did, shooting his gun into the thatch, and jibin' an' defyin' the Blessed Vargin to put out the flames, an' there's an ind o' the poor ould chapel. *Ochhone, Ferrier-gare, orra, orra !*"

While Jack conoluded his narrative loud shouts and ories, at first vaguely indistinct, had gradually swelled upon the air, till now, fearfully defined as notes of affray, they startled the pallid listeners into action.

"Forward !" again cried Father Murphy, spurring hard towards Miltown, the direction from whence the sounds proceeded. Soon they came in view of a party of Orange yeomanry, deftly brandishing arms in pursuit of some score people, men, women, and children, the latter in advance flying towards a neighbouring thicket. At sight of the well-known Father John, whom their comrades had expressed the amiable intent of burning in his own chapel, perhaps a superstitious panic seized them, or else too lively an impression had been made upon them of the efficacy of even a few pikes, wielded in strong hands ; moreover, these rebels were not in retreat, but in advance ; so the bump of caution, in accurate proportion, having been judiciously set in juxtaposition with the bump of destructiveness in each head, the stout Orange yeomanry made sudden halt, and turned tail, leaving their exhausted quarry free to seek their priest, and gasp out their tale of sorrow into his sympathising bosom.

"Oh, *soggarth aroon !*" exclaimed the weeping people, thronging around him. "Where shall we fly from the black persecution that has come upon us. Better, oh, better, we were at once in our graves !"

"No, it would not be better, my good people," stoutly made answer Father John, his small stature seeming to expand and tower into height, inflated by the lofty spirit

of enthusiasm now escaped from all control, and swelling within his bosom, while with concentrated fire his blue eye flashed and blazed like comet in its orbit. His words were few, but weighty.

"When oppression rises to a point that necessitates self-defence from causeless and indiscriminate butchery, we stand acquitted of responsibility, and further quiescence becomes abject cowardice. Let them that kindled the conflagration reck the consequence. Up with your pikes, and follow me."

As if a spark had been suddenly dropped into a magazine of gunpowder, such was the effect of Father John's address upon the electrified band, a moment since sunk in gloomy dejection and despondence. Now cold dismay, weary apathy, fatigue, hunger, all forgotten, exulting acclamation burst forth, and culminated in a chorus shout: "Lead on! lead on! we'll follow!"

Father John waited till the storm subsided, then spoke again:

"My friends, hearken; one word more. No descendants of Cromwellian regicides, freebooters, and canting blood-stained hypocrites are we, but the posterity of a virtuous, noble, high-souled ancestry, whose lives or whose names were never tarnished by deed of baseness. Hence, in the strife it has now devolved upon us as duty to wage with tyranny, let no act unworthy of Christian men sully our fair fame. Respect the property of neighbours, hold sacred as the sanctuary the homes alike of friend and foeman, protect the weak, defend the helpless, show mercy to them that crave it, and let none feel the fury of your just wrath, save the implacable foeman, whose hand is lifted against your hand—him smite down without ruth."

Having delivered himself of this oration, and resolving to inaugurate his career as captain of insurgents by an enterprise that should signalise his prowess, and strike terror into the hearts of tyrants, Father John entered into consultation with Miles and Hugh O'Byrne, and proposed that an attack should that night be made on the Camolin yeomanry as they returned, from one of their daily forays

upon the people, to Camolin Park, the residence of Lord Mountnorris, their colonel. This being settled, the men were dispersed, to provide themselves with whatever arms they could procure and food for the women and children concealed in the furze.

* * * * *

Returning leisurely homeward in the gloom of night-fall, each one expatiating upon details of his own demoniac achievements, the military came in sight of a barricade of some sort obstructing their route, and one approached to ascertain its nature, while the rest halted at a short distance. All at once, from thicket, copse, and bush, a yell, portentous, fierce, and thrilling, burst loud and high, echoed around on every side; each startled trooper grasped brand and pistol while plunging horses reared and bolted. In vain, in vain!—no time for thought, none for action;—the ambushed foe are upon them, in their very midst; pikes and pitchforks are brandishing, scythes are sweeping, axes and bludgeons are crashing. 'Tis scarcely five minutes: every saddle is empty; gashed corpses lie weltering in blood upon the highway, struck down by that fell swoop of the avenger. Rapidly they are stripped of their accoutrements and spoil, while the victors, leaping into their vacant saddles, speed on wings of wind to Camolin Park, to seize upon the store of arms that had been given up by the people, in addition to which, having also captured a quantity of new carbines provided by Lord Mountnorris—fortunately for himself absent—for the arming of his corps, they returned triumphant to cheer those who with anxious bosoms awaited the issue of their enterprise, and send forth by scout and courier the glad tidings to many a distant sheiling and summon recruits to the field.

Through the entire county the news of the surprise and defeat of the Camolin cavalry (according to rough estimate about one hundred and fifty men) spread like wildfire. The North Cork, then stationed in barracks, and the Shilmalier yeomen cavalry, immediately got under arms to march to Oulart Hill, where it was rumoured the insurgents had taken up a position, the former taking a route

through the village of Castlebridge, and the latter proceeding by the sea-coast, each corps to meet at Ballyfarnoc, and thence proceed together to Ballinamonabeg. The militia quartered at Gorey, meanwhile, apprehending that the victors might direct their march thither, seized with terror, fled from the town, and foaming with rage, impatient not to meet in bold conflict the Irish peasant foe, half-naked and half-armed, but to wreak direct vengeance upon the aged parents, the wives, and children that should have the misfortune to fall into their hands. Burning whole villages, murdering and pillaging, these soldiers of Britain went their way, emulating each other in deeds of ferocity not to be surpassed by the hell fiends who instigated them: for each went to the verge of possibility, and neither could do more.

While the above scenes were being enacted others of similar nature were at the same hour transpiring in numberless localities; for, the war-flame once exploded, the combustion spread with velocity, rushing along, and fusing and igniting all the land in general conflagration. On Kilmaethomas Hill, about nine miles west of Gorey, a multitude of women and children, flying from the yeomanry, had taken refuge. It was the Sunday of Pentecost, and their priest, Father Michael Murphy, on his way to give Mass to his flock, was waylaid by a party of peasants, who besought him to accompany them to the hill, where they were resolved to stand in defence of their wives and children.

The priest made answer: "My friends, I have been, as you know from the beginning, opposed to armed resistance of our powerful opponents; but as affairs have reached a crisis that leaves us no choice between honourable or dishonourable death, let us elect the former. Worse cannot befall us, and in the name of the God of justice, leaving the issue in his hands, victory or defeat, life or death, I will go with you, and stand beside you to the end, for weal or woe."

Amid murmured cheers and blessings he accompanied them to the hill, where soon after they were attacked by two hundred yeomen from Carnew, who, as they came

within musket range, poured volley after volley into the unarmed crowd, who, flying in frenzied terror, were pursued and slaughtered, to the number of three hundred, by the yeomen in their march of seven miles, also burning one hundred cabins and two Catholic chapels.

Unaware of this remoter tragedy, Father John Murphy had led three thousand people to the hill of Oulart, out of which number there were not more than three hundred fighting men, the rest of the multitude consisting of women and children, who, like a herd of stricken deer, flocked around, and followed him for safety. Upon this eminence, behind a breast-high ditch, Father John now fully entered into the spirit of the martial game, and resolute to strike blow for blow, stationed the most effective of his force, placing in the rear the women and children, and thus disposed, awaited the approach of the enemy.

The sun was slowly declining in the West, and through bars of dark nebulae, transversing his disk, seemed to gaze through a lattice upon the scene below. How serene and golden! Suddenly the anxious watchers on the hill descried, advancing from the Wexford side, a squadron of the North Cork infantry, with the Shilmalier cavalry, under Colonel Lehunte; and as they approached, the insurgents could perceive, from their elevated position, that they were manœuvring their force so as to surround the hill, and so cut off all chance of escape in case of their defeat. It was even so. Deploying into line, the horse began, at quick pace, to ascend the southern slope, all unconscious of the ambushed foe, watching lynx-like every movement, and scarcely stifling the throb of hearts that palpitated with eager excitement for the onset.

"Now, bold hands, steady aim, and thin their ranks," whispered Father John to Hugh and Miles, crouched beside him on one side.

"Begorra, yer riverence, I wish we had a bet on it," whispered Johnny Doyle and Kieran O'Hart on the other. "It 'ud be a sin and a shame not to handle these illigant fowlin'-pieces natelly; an' sorra betther use we'll ever make o' thim thin to knock down a kishful of such kites."

They lapsed into silence, while on, on cantered the foe, seeing nothing but a vast concourse of dismayed, dumb-stricken women and children devoted to massacre, with some aged, decrepit men, and now within musket range. Major Lombard, the second in command, rode out in advance of his men, grimly smiling assent as a sergeant in his hearing facetiously cried to a comrade :

"Cook's soul ! we'll have sport now ! Dickey, ye dog, ain't we in luck ? Soldiering is a fine trade ; pay better than any ; an' danged I am if ever I go back to slaughtering bullocks while I can slaughter rebels."

"Forward," shouted Major Lombard, waving his sword aloft. "Coast clear, men decamped, women only to dispose of. Ho !—what !—ho !——" reeling from his saddle as the word—the last he should ever utter—passed his lips. Pierced by a musket ball from the well-levelled piece of Hugh O'Byrne, Major Lombard fell from his steed a lifeless corpse.

"More power to ye, Misther Hugh !" shouted Ned Burke, close at his elbow, and making ready to pour his contribution into the ranks that madly pressed forward at accelerated pace to avenge their leader. "Now, sir, now, Misther Miles," continued the excited boy. "Here they come, slap dash ! Just up with yer hats, every man that owns one, on the pike's end, an' the villains 'll think it's ourselves, an' waste a round o' shot on us, while we pitch into 'em like marbles."

Instantly adopting the strategic suggestion of the sharp-witted youth, the hedge was lined with hats just seen above the topmost boughs swaying and moving, while a furious detonation of artillery from the advancing enemy made them soon aware of the success of the ruse.

Having halted to deliver this volley, and observing no symptom of its effects, the soldiery, reloading their empty muskets, advanced at more deliberate pace, and with more sobered aspect they scanned the way before them. The insurgents, obeying Father Murphy's orders, and curbing their eager spirits, still lay quiet, Hugh's strong hand clutching the shoulder of Ned Burke, and pinioning him in the very act of making an' impetuous spring,

while, full of admiration of his courage, he apostrophised him :

"Steady, my young lion ; don't be in such haste to get knocked over, we can't spare you yet,"

"Six muskets fire !" cried out Father John.

Three men at each side of him rose on one knee, planted their pieces, and with deadly accuracy fired upon their assailants, six of whom fell dead, while their astounded comrades, in precipitate confusion, discharged a third ineffectual fusilade at the hedge with its empty hats waving defiance.

"Fire !" again cried the sonorous tones of the couchant chief.

Another six of the insurgents, prompt to the mandate, poured in a second fatal volley : another six bit the dust.

"Charge, pikes !" thundered the voice of power ; and with a sound like the roar of billows rushing along came the ambushed foe, crashing through the hedge, while disorganised and panic-stricken at onset so unexpected, helter-skelter broke the militia down the slope of the hill, pursued by the barefooted insurgents, whose avenging pikes were so imbued in gore that, with the exception of one man, Lieutenant-Colonel Foot, who, mounted on a good horse, reached Wexford in safety, all of the rank and file perished in that disastrous expedition, the last being slain, about a mile from the hill, by Johnny Doyle, upon whose heart, callosified to flint by the fate of his sisters and friends, when they had in vain implored compassion, in turn rejected with stern obduracy every appeal for mercy ; and riding a fine horse, and flourishing sword and musket, he leisurely retired triumphant to the hill.

Six officers were killed in this engagement, viz., Major Lombard, the Hon. Captain de Courcey, brother of Lord Kinsale ; Lieutenants Barry, Williams, Ware, and Ensign Keogh.

The victorious insurgents, leaving Oulart, encamped for the night on the hill of Carrigrua, and next morning set out for Ferns, *en route* to Enniscorthy. As he passed along, the small force of three hundred men, with which Father Murphy had so signally displayed military talent

of a high order, with bravery the most dauntless, was now augmented to five thousand by gallant young peasants, eager to enroll themselves beneath such a leader, burning to avenge many a wrong, and hopeful to win by their prowess, at least, the guerdon of freedom from the iron rod of despotism for themselves and their people. About five hundred men of this little army carried firearms. Upon the hill of Ballyyorrel they halted to rest after their long march, and to deliberate concerning Father John's proposed attack on Enniscorthy, whither the royalist troops had retreated before them. Here they were joined by Father Michael Murphy, at the head of the young men of his parish, "full of ardour for the conflict;" but, like their comrades, chiefly armed with the ubiquitous pike, and such hastily improvised weapons as hatchets, scythes, and pitchforks. The plan of attack upon the town having been unanimously agreed upon, it was now arranged to provide for the women and children, by billeting them up and down upon such farmhouses and cabins as had hitherto the good fortune to escape the ravages of the yeomanry or their destruction by the royalist troops. These not only threw open their doors freely to the friends of the insurgents, but took care along the line of march to supply the latter, as plentifully as their poor means would admit, with griddlebread, eggs, milk, butter, potatoes, &c.; while the insurgents, moreover, provisioned their camp by levying contributions of cattle from the pastures of the enemy lying on their route. Thus disburdened of a weighty encumbrance—save few exceptions, in the person of Moll Doyle, now a reckless virago, Kitty Burke, and others of the same pugnacious stamp—Doyle, Mooney's ailing wife and two grandchildren of Norah Lanigan's, with many more of constitution too impaired or delicate to sustain the hardships to which they were exposed, had died on the journey previously—the insurgents set out, two hundred gunmen preceding the main body, and soon came in sight of Enniscorthy, garrisoned by five hundred of the North Cork Militia, with several strong yeomanry corps, &c., fenced on their left side by the river Slaney, and on their right and rear

by the walls of the town and overtopping houses, guarded with loyal citizens, among them some "respectable Catholics," who had offered their services, begging to be supplied with arms, to join in the onslaught against their countrymen and co-religionists: but these were of Anglo-Saxon pedigree. Yet, such the force of prejudice, as Papists, the boon was refused, with taunts and threats for their temerity in proffering their "despised aid," and aspiring to a place among the exclusive ranks of the defenders of the Crown and the monopolisers of loyalty.

In the afternoon of a sultry summer day, the approach of the insurgents by the road leading to Duffery Gate being perceived, Captain Snow took his station at the bridge, to secure retreat, in case of defeat; while the cavalry pouring out, careered swiftly to the encounter, upon which the advanced insurgents quitted the road, posted themselves behind the ditches that bounded it on either side, and poured upon the foremost squadron a close and heavy fire which soon compelled them to a yet more hasty retreat, Reinforced, however, again they advanced; and again decimated by the fierce bullet-storm that showered and beat upon them—front, flank, and rear—the scattered rout fled in confusion before the fire of the cool, deliberate marksmen.

While the gunmen thus employed the mounted enemy, the main body of the insurgents halted at a short distance from the town to consult with Miles O'Byrne, Hugh being charged with the conduct of the gunmen, as to the best mode of attacking the well-armed and advantageously posted troops defending its approaches. Father Michael Murphy and Miles were of opinion that nothing short of impetuous onslaught, in compact wedge, could cut through the firm array, which Father John admitted, but observed that such a victory would be more ruinous than defeat, from the loss their own ranks would inevitably sustain in the affray. A space of perplexed rumination ensued, when Father John cried:

"I have it, Miles! What did the Carthaginian general do two thousand years ago? Let's try the same expedient now. Ha, I see you know the story and compre

hend my plan," he added, as Miles, Father Michael, and others called to the men to drive all the cattle, mostly young bullocks, to the front ranks, which being promptly executed, the order was given to the pikemen to goad them furiously forward, while the squadron, thus sheltered, swiftly followed in the rear of the maddened herd, dashing headforemost, scared by the wild shouts and hurrying goad of the agile pikemen at their heels. The royalist troops, beholding the frantic herd bearing furiously down upon their lines, and hearing above the tumultuous bellowing, the roar and din of the rushing foe, formed into square, with musket and bayonet, to repel the blind charge of these novel assailants; but unavailing were all their efforts to arrest the impetuous flight of the drove, as, infuriated by the yells and sharp points of the pursuers' pikes, they burst into the throng of the now dismayed soldiery, goading, trampling, and opening the way for the terrible pikemen, now in their midst, with the awful memories of tortured victims, murdered friends and kindred, wrecked homes and temples, seething in their bosoms, and igniting in every heart a wild joy of vengeance that should deafen it to every impulse of mercy. Not long was the stand made by those British warriors, arrayed in all the panoply of war, against the outraged peasantry, whose wrongs cried to heaven for vengeance, and, the hitherto peaceful, gentle pastors, and obscure Catholic gentlemen who led the host to victory, wiser if not better men. The royalist troops, fearfully thinned, and completely routed, fled precipitately into the town, with the victors in close pursuit at their heels; but here their triumphant progress was checked by a sharp fusilade from the houses, which opened to receive those who had escaped from the Duffery Gate, and now united with them in launching a terrible fire upon the unsheltered phalanx, which sustained it with the steadiness of veteran soldiers, and in turn proceeded to force an entrance into those hostile habitations. Unflinching valour and resolute perseverance at length prevailed: all the suburban district was on fire, while myriads of insurgents, appearing on the summit of Vinegar Hill, waving green banners, amid "black and

frowning masses of pike-heads," made salutary appeal to the instinct of self-preservation in every loyalist bosom. Swiftly vacating their post, *Sauve qui peut*, became the word, and a flight *en masse* of the royalists left the insurgents at four o'clock, in possession of Enniscorthy, with the arms and ammunition of the town.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

THE BURNING OF ENNISCORTHY.

"Each heart had caught the patriot spark,
Old man and stripling, priest and clerk;
Bondaman and serf: even female hand
Stretch'd to the hatchet or the brand."

LORD OF THE ISLES.

"Dark children of the hills! 'twas then ye wrought
Deeds of fierce daring, rudely, sternly grand,
As 'midst your craggy citadels ye fought,
And women mingled with your warrior band."

Modern Greece—HERMANS.

AMONG the houses that belched forth shafts of flame and hurled deadly missile upon the insurgents, there was one conspicuous for more effectual havoc, a stately mansion, from whose many windows above an incessant fire galled their surging mass, which Miles and Hugh O'Byrne perceiving, followed by Ned Burke, who fought stoutly beside them all through, they snatched mattock and sledge-hammer from the hands of some of their party, and rushing forward, aided by Ned, with a cleaver, they applied themselves with such vigour to the task, that, beneath the combined assault, the well-barricaded portal was wrenched asunder, and, plying musket, pike, and broadsword, with fury that bore down all opposition, over heaps of slain defenders—officers, soldiers, menials—they

mounted the blood-reeking stairs, followed by a staunch throng of their party, uttering the deathful shouts of an incensed and thoughtless rabble, intent upon but one object—vengeful annihilation of an implacable foe. Having forced their way to the drawing-room, which had been vacated by the officers who had been firing from the windows, to defend the lower portion of the mansion and obstruct the progress of the invaders, a strange and unexpected scene met their eye. The elegant saloon was thronged with women and children, who, cowering with terror, and anticipating fearful death or outrage, set up a wail of terror, some fainting, and some lifting clasped hands with imploring gesture, as if supplicating mercy. At the first hasty glance Miles was about to withdraw and close the door, and so relieve them of their terror, when his roving eye alighted upon the haughty form of Percy Esmond, with pale but defiant aspect, standing against the fireplace. Sternly as the eyes of each encountered, they settled in the cold glare of hatred; but while Miles maintained scornful silence, Esmond tauntingly addressed him:—

“For what do you delay, gentle victor? Is it to enjoy awhile your triumph in contemplation of the surfeit of vengeance that awaits you and your myrmidons you pause in your work of blood?”

Miles strode forward, and then first perceived what the intervening crowd had screened from view—a middle-aged officer lying wounded upon a lounge, a lady of matronly aspect kneeling beside him, his hand clasped in hers, and two younger ladies bending over him, their faces buried in their hands, as they lay upon the arm of the lounge. Miles had strode forward, with Hugh at his heels, pre-meditating to accost Esmond briefly: “Take your sword and defend.” But now he also perceived that Esmond’s right arm, broken by a musket-ball, hung in a sling, and that his gun, emptied of its last charge of powder, stood beside him, and neither he nor Hugh, bestowing more than cursory observation upon the ladies, whom neither of them immediately recognised, Miles spoke:

“Were my bosom fraught with spirit akin to thine,

Esmond, or that of thy sanguinary compeers, doubt not but ere thy lips had poured the challenge, neither sex nor age had arrested a dire retaliation of many a cruel wrong inflicted upon us in the very wantonness of unprovoked malice, and in thy own person many a grievous injury inflicted by your ancestry on mine requited ; but, happily for you and yours, in this hour of retribution, ours is that reviled creed which does not sanction mean revenge upon a foe, much less cold-blooded murder of a neighbour ; and ours is this defamed land whose ancient laws forbade to smite an unarmed foe. Hence, go in peace, you and yours, till perchance another day it may be given us the fortune to encounter on a fair field, where, doubt not, neither heart of mine nor arm will fail to exact the redress of much cause of grievance in your best blood."

While thus, in accent severe and concise, Miles spoke, his back, turned to the group in the rere, had shaded them from his notice, or that of Hugh concentrated upon Percy Esmond, who, writhing between physical pain, mental torture, and the stinging speech of one despised as an abject inferior, now assuming the authority of an exulting conqueror, was about to make exasperating rejoinder, a gentle hand, laid upon the arm of Miles, withdrew his attention, and turning, he started at sight of the pallid face of Flora Esmond, pleadingly uplifted to his, while Ethel Courtney, in tears, stood beside her, to the very obvious and sudden discomposure of Hugh, as, stepping forward, he took her trembling hand in his, and soothingly said, in low tone :

"Hush, hush ! don't cry so ;—the worst is over ;—no harm shall befall you."

"But my father is wounded," sobbed Ethel, pointing to the sofa, while Miles addressed Flora Esmond in manner wavering between reserve and compassion :

"We had not known that you were domiciled in this mansion, lady, else, possibly, you had proved its guardian-angel. Very loth had we been to invade a temple wherein was enshrined patroness so fair ; albeit stern necessity seldom leaves a soldier freedom of action. What is your pleasure ? Let it be mine to promote it."

"Oh ! to thank you ;—to thank you a thousand times,

and to entreat your protection of us all from the violence of your people in this terrible strife!" She faltered, with humid eyes fixed upon his, while Hugh, approaching the sofa with Ethel, addressed the sufferer with blunt kindness:

"Well, old gentleman, are you badly hurt? Very sorry I am for you. Where is the wound? How did it happen?"

"Oh, plague on you!" roared the officer, in a tone that did not augur of much impaired vitality, and dashed Hugh into awed silence. "I'm badly hurt here, sir," striking his side with impatient hand. "Never knew, in all the course of my military experience, such a mode of attack. None but barbarians, like the Persians, who carried elephants to battle, would have thought of it;—an ungovernable herd of bulls marched upon us! Why hadn't you got them armed with visors, breastplates, and scythes, to make their execution more complete? Oh!—ho!—ho!"

"My dear sir," responded Hugh, while Miles, attracted by the novel declamation, came over to inspect the case, and listen, "That is not telling me about your hurt."

"Isn't it?" vociferated the sufferer. "Striving to turn back the drove, while shooting one I got knocked down by another, trampled by a score, and rescued by my nephew there, who got his arm broken by a stray bullet aimed at one; and there are three ribs broken. What do you call that?"

"Well, sir, these are the chances of battle," said Miles. "We must do the best we can for you."

"Chances of battle!" retorted the irascible officer. "I tell you, sir, I had rather got twenty honourable scars by the enemy's pikes. There's no honour in being knocked down or gored by a bull; and no promotion."

"Have patience, Miles, dear," murmured the patient's wife, now rising, and seeming much relieved. "I had feared it was worse with you; but you will soon get over it."

"I'll never get over it, wife; I'm done for. What'll become of you and that child Ethel with these cursed victorious Croppies? I often warned our fellows to let the people alone, and they wouldn't. Now see what it's

come to. Oh! oh! oh! I can't draw my breath. I'm dying!"

"Easy now, sir," said Miles, "you're not dying; we'll look for and send a surgeon to you. Meanwhile, rest assured that no further hurt shall be done you by our people; and for the sake of our mutual name—mine is Miles, too—let us shake hands."

"Go 'long out of that! Is it I shake hands with a rebel!" shouted Captain Courtney, while his dismayed wife uttered a depreating ejaculation, and Ethel, deeply pained, cried:

"Oh, papa!"

"Never mind, we'll waive the ceremony," said Miles; "wounded men are not proverbially good-tempered. Well, Ned, what now?" he continued as Ned Burke who during this time had been aiding Johnny Doyle and their respective parents, Moll and Kitty, to search the bodies of the slain for gunpowder and bullets, and help the insurgent tide, as it swept by, with contributions of weapons to those who lacked, came in, with flushed and angry visage, crying:

"Mr. Hugh!—Mr. Miles! will ye come here, sir?"

"Well, what is it, Ned?" reiterated Hugh, who, knowing that they had vanquished every opponent, and that the mansion was entirely in the hands of the insurgents, saw no motive for alarm.

"Sir," cried Ned, wrathfully, and same moment pushing a little lad of about twelve years old into the room, "there's three or four fellows of ours, massacreing the wounded, without rhyme or reason. They wanted to kill this little chap, an' I had enough to do to save him from them."

While Ned was yet speaking, three ruffianly-looking fellows rushed in, half-drunk, brandishing gory pikes, and exclaiming: "Give the Orange cub here. It's agin ordhers to spare one of the seed or breed;—out wid him!"

"Hold! Back, on your lives, you banditti!" exclaimed Miles, disengaging himself from Flora Esmond, who, in a paroxysm of terror, had seized his arm; and recognising

among the trio the persons of Cole and Cooper, he continued: "Touch a hair of his head at your peril; and if we hear of your slaying another wounded man, it will be death for you. 'Tis such wretches as these," he added, turning to Percy Esmond, "that disgrace and damage the character of the best and holiest cause that ever listed the sword of heroes, and from which no ranks of war are exempt: poltroons and cowards of the lowest grade, whose frothy courage, imbibed from intoxicating stimulants, spurs them on to spurious valour in perpetrating deeds of ferocity brave men would abhor. Be off, knaves!"

"Ay will we; an' report you to the captain, Father Murphy, for a frind o' the inimy, an' sheltherin' the bloody Orangemin," insolently retorted the foremost ruffian, Cooper, sneaking off.

"How can ye blame 'im?—shure he's 'got a sweetheart among 'em," grinned the second, with wink and pointed allusion that sent the swift blood mantling to the brow of Flora Esmond, while Miles looked thunderbolts after the trio; and Hugh laughingly turned to the boy, who had been crying bitterly, in piteous supplication for his little life, and now stood by his manful protector, Ned Burke: "Well, my little man, what have you to say for yourself—who are you?"

"I'm the drummer, please sir," whimpered the little fellow. "I ran in here with Sergeant Brown when the insurgents forced the lines."

"Then, my boy," said Miles, "go find your drum; scamper after your friends, and play 'Croppies, lie down' to your heart's content among them. Go, you are free. See him safe to the street, Ned."

"Thank ye, sir; an' I'll never join in playing, 'Croppies, lie down,' again," said the grateful youth, anxious to make some return for the mercy shown him; and he was in the act of retreating, when, heralded by loud, tumultuous din and outcries, in rushed Moll Doyle and Kitty, truth compels us to add bloodstained on their garments, their arms up to their elbows wet with blood, and blood fresh on the pikes they bore in their sturdy hands.

"Come along, Misther Miles! Come on, Misther

Hugh!" yelled Moll Doyle. "What are ye cosherin' here for, and the min gone on wid Father Murphy, an' the town on fire, and smokin' at all ends?"

Miles, knowing that Moll Doyle would not forget her habitual respect to accost him in such manner, save under great excitement, and now aware of the cause of the darkness that, hitherto unheeded, had been gradually involving the atmosphere, ran with Hugh to look out of the window; while Captain Courtney, incensed at the intrusion of the belligerents in such plight, roared like a stentor:

"Get out, you bold hussies! you savage Bellonas! How dare you present yourselves here, you libels on womanhood; you——"

"Arrah, musha, take time to draw breath," retorted Kitty, stepping forward before Moll Doyle, who, looking at her pike, seemed to deliberate whether it or she should silence the speaker. "It is you, sir," cried Kitty, with vociferous volubility, "an' the likes o' you that has made us what we are. Whin yees burned the roof over our heads, murdered our husbands an' childhre afore our eyes, an' dhrove us naked on the highway, what respect did ye lave us for our womanhood? So we changed ourselves into brave min; an' proud I am to the fore to say it, not a man among 'em has made betther use o' the pike thin Moll Doyle an' myself;—an', plaze God, we'll use it till it'll be your turn nixt to crave mercy, like women, on bended knees; an' thin maybe ye'll know what it is to have Christianable, human feelin's made sport of; an'——"

"Come, come, Joan of Arc, that will do," said Miles, interrupting the eloquent harangue.

Moll Doyle, in turn, interrupted him: "For shame, Misther Miles! I wondher at ye, sir, to be jibin' an' callin' honest women out o' their names: not but Jane of Arklow may be a very dacent woman, for all I know;—but give Kitty her own name, if ye plaze sir. She has no need to be ashamed of it before the best quality. *Inagh!*"

"No, no, my dear soul; I meant a compliment. Don't be so captious. The town's on fire, and it will give us enough to do to escape out of it," hastily returned Miles, looking

very serious and anxious. "What are you going to do, Lieutenant Esmond? You are in absolute danger here."

"I don't suppose we'll be better off anywhere," returned Esmond, sullenly; "we must expect to be murdered in the street, by your Hottentots."

"And I can't budge," groaned Captain Courtney—"oh; oh!—oh!"

"We must fly at once," cried Hugh, imperatively; "the flames are spreading rapidly, and the inhabitants—men, women, and children, our own men, and the garrison, are all flying pell-mell."

"Trust yourselves to our guidance till we place you in safety among your friends," cried Miles. Then, without waiting for response, he called to Moll Doyle and Kitty to assist Ned and the little drummer to carry forth the wounded captain upon a litter, hastily fashioned of a pair of sheets, which command, ungraciously obeyed by the indignant heroines, had met with flat refusal; but at the first symptom of obstreperous demurance there flashed from his eye a glance that instantly enforced submission; and venting their disapprobation of the task assigned them in grumbling murmurs, they hurried along with their burden, shouting to go slow, not to shake the life out of him; to keep near their master, that he would largely compensate them, and so forth. The menials of the household, by this time in wild commotion, with some lady friends of the family and children, were hurrying to and fro, to secure some sort of covering to protect them from the sparks now flying thickly in the air, and the scorching heat of the blazing houses. Miles took Mrs. Courtney, while Hugh wrapped his *cotamore* round Ethel, to secure her white muslin robe from ignition, holding trays over their heads; while Percy Esmond followed with Flora, and others pressing close behind them, wrapped in blankets, or sheltered beneath pillows, &c. On emerging into the street, horrifying was the scene that encountered them on every side—hundreds of burning dwellings vomited cascades of flame into the sultry atmosphere, and tongues of lurid flame shot up and darted like lightning

flashes through the dense volumes of wreathing smoke, that every moment waved a pall of deeper gloom, and wrapt in blacker shroud the town of Enniscorthy; while through the sable cloud an angry blood-red sun, round and solid as ball of fire, looked down from above upon struggling masses of people, shrieking women, crying children, clamorous men, royalist and insurgent, promiscuously huddled, in that flight for life, through scorching streets, slaked with hot ashes. Wealth and poverty, the aristocrat and the plebeian, indiscriminately blended in the surging throng, officers who had torn off their epaulettes and men of station who had divested themselves of the abused insignia of power, which guilty conscience told them had, in lieu of winning homage and respect, rendered them obnoxious and hateful to the ill-treated people—all, all flying, frenzied and distracted with terror, before the sword of the avenger. Swiftly as their encumbered steps could speed, Miles and Hugh made good their progress, half-stifled by the smoke and heat, yet sustaining by kind words, and encouraging their almost fainting companions to perseverance, till they had left behind the castle of Enniscorthy, just stormed by the insurgents, when some *debris*, tumbling from a roof, falling in with a crash like thunder, struck Percy Esmond, pitching him forward on his face, and dragging with him his sister, who leaned upon his arm. This accident brought the procession to a halt, and Mrs. Courtney and Ethel almost simultaneously fainting—one from exhaustion, the other overcome by sudden panic—Miles and Hugh, sorely embarrassed for some moments, were at length relieved at sight of some yeomanry dashing along, to whom they called to take charge of their friends to Wexford, or else assist to convey them beyond the vicinage of danger; but the gallant yeomen were too solicitous for their own safety to heed the appeals, they vanished like magic; and all that remained then was to lift Esmond who had been stunned by the blow and the fall, and summon aid from their own bands to carry their charge to Vinegar Hill, the now proximate rendezvous of the insurgents. This was soon accomplished; and selecting a good-looking house

situated midway up the slope of the hill, where he was informed Father John Murphy was then resting, with some others, from the fatigue of the day, Miles ordered the litter-bearers to proceed thither, Captain Courtney yelling the while, like a lunatic :

"Not there ! not there, you villains ! Have you betrayed ? and is it to your priest you are taking us prisoners, to be murdered in cold blood ? Oh !—oh !—oh !"

"Be quiet, Captain Courtney ; you are in no danger of such catastrophe," said Miles, who could have laughed at the ludicrous expression of the captain's really terrified face, but for meeting the gloomy eye of the revived Edmond, and the questioning one of Flora reproachfully fixed on him. "My priest is not so bad as you suppose."

"Nonsense, nonsense, sir ; don't I know better ? Don't I know that if the priest commanded you, on pain of damnation, to obey him you would have no choice but to murder us ; and if you didn't he has plenty of agents to do his behests," blurted out the distressed captain.

Without answering him, Miles strode through the open portal, and the lounging swarm of wondering pikemen, all strangers to him, yet deferentially making way before the green scarf-badge that indicated his post of command in their ranks, and closely followed by his convoy, he entered a parlour of the mansion, whose former occupants having fled left it in peaceable possession of the enemy. Father Murphy, who, seated at a table with some others, was regaling himself with a hearty meal of cold beef, bread and butter, and wine—the first time he had tasted food since the preceding day—and Gerald Byrne of Ballymanus seated beside him, making inroads on a piece of bacon, loudly hailed him :

"*Cead mille failthe*, Miles ! Where's Hugh ? What became of you ? We feared you had got knocked off. Come, sit down and have a mouthful, you must need it," were the consecutive exclamations with which he was greeted by each in turn, the while surveying the party at the door, till Father John continued :

"Who are these friends of yours ? What ails them ? They seem in sorry plight."

"So they are," said Miles. "Friends of mine and Hugh's; escaped under our convoy from Enniscorthy, and going to Wexford when rested and refreshed. I'm glad to see you've got some good cheer to welcome us. Give a glass of wine to these ladies, and find me a surgeon to dress the wounds of Captain Courtney and Lieutenant Esmond."

"I'm your man, sir," cried a portly individual rising, and coming forward to inspect the patients, while Father Murphy, benevolently smiling at the intimidated ladies, invited them to a seat at the table, and setting before them grateful refreshment, beckoned to Moll Doyle and Kitty, Ned Burke, and the little drummer, relieved from their burden, to seat themselves on the floor, while he plied them with wedges of bread and beef, and mugs of beer.

Upon examination by the surgeon it was found that Captain Courtney had only one rib broken, which, though he would not believe it, gave him much secret satisfaction. Lieutenant Esmond's arm was skilfully set, and the wound on his head dressed, and by the time they had each drank a couple of glasses of wine, and partaken of some viands, they were in a much ameliorated frame of mind;—indeed so much so, that Captain Courtney, regaining some of his wonted hardy courage, graphically and characteristically put the question to the priestly captain of the insurgents, while as yet surveying him through the smoked glass of intense prejudice:

"May I make bold to ask what are you going to do next—fall, perhaps, on Wexford, and leave it in the same ruin as Enniscorthy?"

"For whatever we do, my friend, thank yourselves," responded Father John, coldly, swallowing a hasty morsel. "You've set us a bad example, and must not be surprised to find the pupils deftly rehearse the task to which they have been so whipped on. If you have burned all the dwellings of the poor you have left nothing for us but the towns and mansions of the wealthy, so we have, you see, no choice."

"And you'd have had less, let me tell you, but for the cowardice of the rascally North Cork Yeomanry at Oulart,

who, instead of standing their ground till we could look about us, ran away ; and we'd have known nothing about our danger but for the escape of Foot, the nimblest among them. Glad you cut them all off to a man ; such poltroons are unfit to live."

"I think, sir," laughed Father John, "though we differ on some points we would agree also on a few, and one is, that cowards are great stumbling-blocks in more ways than one to any cause, and were much better timely weeded out, as brave men would sooner come to reasonable understanding and fair adjustment of quarrel."

There was a *bonhomie* and an outspoken manner about Father John, which, along with his paternal countenance, at once benignly claiming reverence, and commanding respect, was incipiently making favourable impressions upon Captain Courteney, who granted a conditional assent, muttering while glanced at his nephew :

"Ay, if they were *all* gentlemen."

"Certainly," responded Percy Esmond ; "that is an indispensable qualification. One could not expect to find in a brute rabble more than the ferocious courage incidental to the brute beast : reason would appeal in vain to their understanding."

Miles O'Byrne, who felt that the speaker's eye was upon him, and that there was a sinister allusion in the drift of his speech, made haughty interrogation :

"Do you consider all those holding commissions in the line gentlemen ?"

"They are loyalists and enlightened Protestants," said the lieutenant, grandly.

"Evading the point does not answer the question," smiled Hugh. "So, I daresay, are your valet and butler loyal fellows, and good church goers."

"Can the half of them spell their own names ?" cried Gerald of Ballymanus, ironically.

"You must admit that the least of them is superior in civilisation and social grade to the rag, tag, and bobtail you deem it an honour to lead into rebellion against the best of kings, in foray upon his peaceful subjects, and which error may yet cost you dear. Yes, I assert, as com-

pared with yours, the least of ours is a gentleman," replied Esmond, frowning upon the insurgent leaders.

Miles resumed :

"Then all I can say is, if your definition of a gentleman be founded upon his loyalty, Protestantism, a good outward coat, and superior social grade—that in the name of loyalty and Protestantism, and on the strength of his good coat and superior social grade—your gentlemen, inaccessible to reason, have perpetrated crimes that never will disgrace the meanest of our ragged peasantry, whose contempt and scorn they have rendered themselves. Yes, I proclaim it aloud, without possibility of contradiction, your depraved myrmidons have left on record enormities so heinous, that posterity, hearing of them, when the grave has closed over their bones, will cry out : 'Not men, but monsters these !' And yet will the half of their infamy be disclosed till the great accounting day, since there be deeds too vile for even historic pages to note, and which will be found transcribed in the book of the recording angel only? Yes, we have cause to be thankful that our place is not among ranks whose ignoble fame would suffuse our cheeks with the brand of dishonour, the hot blood of shame !"

"But that I anticipate our victorious arms will by-and-by compel you to reverse your opinion I would here and now give you the lie if you mean to allege that dishonour attaches to any corps to which I belong," retorted angry Esmond, unheeding the imploring gestures of his sister, aunt, and cousin.

"And but that I stand pledged to my cause in this great national duel, in which we hope to obtain satisfaction by dint of the sharp argument of pike and musket, I would here and now take up your challenge, and so acquit me that no traducer would again be found to impugn my pretension to equal rights of manhood, or malign any cause I espoused."

The entrance of Father Michael Murphy to summon Father John and his confederates to council here interrupted the angry colloquy between the gentlemen.

Father John immediately rose, and turning to his

guests said, with all the courteous grace and dignified bearing, partly inherent and partly the result of his early pupilage in the College of Seville, and intercourse with the most polished society of Spain: "My friends will, I know, excuse my absence, dictated by imperious necessity, and furthermore permit me inquire as to their wishes. Night is closing in, Wexford is distant, and none of the party appear well fitted to undergo the renewed fatigue of an eleven-mile journey, with, perhaps, indifferent accommodation in a city now thronged with fugitives. Above-stairs in this house are some rooms comfortably appointed. If it be your pleasure to make use of them in the emergency, trust to our insurgent faith that you shall not be disturbed, and I will appoint these women to wait upon you, and attend in every particular to your comfort, while our men withdraw to the sterner duties of the camp."

Father John's address appealed with varied effect to each of his auditors. Flora and Ethel, whom, waiving the brief episode of wordy war with Percy, Miles, and Hugh, had been sedulous in effort to tranquillise and win to gentle confidence in their friendly disposition, quite gained over in heart, were at once for accepting the proposal. Mrs. Courtney, dreading the long journey, and the possible contingency of a night in the barracks or on the street, thought a comfortable room would be more desirable if they could be quite sure of safety among such a multitude of the wild Irish. Captain Courtney and Lieutenant Esmond, feverish with their wounds, and impatient to be among their own friends, thought it better to get on, and accept of Father John's offer of horses and convoy; but then came the wary suspicion suggesting that perhaps on the way the treacherous scoundrels would fall on and murder them. This cogent idea prevailed, and Captain Courtney consented to remain, stipulating that those odious hussies should not approach one of their party, which derogatory injunction was thus resentfully answered by the affronted parties, Kitty, who was mistress of elocution, taking the lead:

"Musha, thin, Kitty returns the compliment. Wid all manner o' rispiet to the ordhers of his raverence, Moll an' I was just sayin' 'Och, sure, now, isn't this a poor case,

that if the inimy coome down on us, as there' no knowin' but they would, an' the min have to march to meet 'em; there was she an' I set for sentries to watch over an' take care o' the likes o' yous—not that I'd begrudge it to the two young ladies, God mark their purty faces to grace! but to be waitin' like dhrynurses an' chambermaids on the gintlemin, an' the boys wantin' us to help em', 'ud aggravate a donkey, an' glad I am ye've made betther choice o' the ould lady to attind ye. Wisha, coome along, Moll, to the council!"

Captain Courtney, observing judicious silence, made no response to this fluent oration, which Moll Doyle, as she followed her termagant relative, wound up, saying:

"Throth, if I war to be put on that duty it's go out soldierin' on my own hook I would, *inagh!*"

Miles approached the alarmed Flora and Ethel, looking dismayed at the viragos whom Hugh and Father John were now striving to pacify, while they drew them forth with themselves, and said: "Don't mind these noisy dames; they are excited and in a querulous mood just now, but in reality, they are tender, good-hearted mothers of families, have till lately led quiet, inoffensive lives, and had Father John not known them to be decent and well-conducted he would not have proposed their services."

"Oh, but they are so blood-stained!" remarked Flora, with a shudder.

"Well, they shall not molest you," said Miles, gently. "Where's the little drummer? There, yonder; I see him speaking to Captain Courtney. Well, I am going now to the camp; should you need any service I can render, depute him to seek me, and meanwhile rest assured that you are safe here as you could be in the midst of your own legions. Adieu!"

Lifting his hat in courtesy, Miles departed with Hugh, just returned to summon him in haste to the council, Flora and Ethel, in deep silence looking after them, till recalled by the voice of Captain Courtney, saying:

"Isn't this a nice fix we're in? In the midst of a rebel camp, not one of our own people about us, servants and all made off to Wexford. May the horned beasts pursue them!"

"Don't agitate yourself, dear," entreated Mrs. Courtney, a small, spare person of very ladylike appearance and prepossessing manners; "it will be bad for you."

"Psha! Lucy, how easy you take it. You women have no feeling. Three ribs broken. I'm sorry now we've trusted ourselves to such barbarians, and Percy so disabled. Mark my words, we're in great peril. The priest is, after all, the best of the lot, and if the murderous squad fall on us, where should we find him now? Flora and Ethel, take my warning, keep out of the way of those brigands that have been showing you so much civility. Heavens! what yahoos their women are. Nice wouldn't it be if they took a fancy to you?—oh, oh, my ribs! Wife, it's all your fault. You would wait for the garrison ball, when I wanted to go up to Dublin. If misfortune comes of it, I'll lay it at your door, and yours, Flora, that encouraged your aunt to stay, because, forsooth, you didn't like meeting Carhampton, and Marmion teased you, and—well, you may find it out of the frying-pan into the fire. But I'll up to Dublin, come or stay who will, and get a surgeon to attend me that has skill in his profession. I will!—all your fault!—Enniscorthy burned to the ground, and heaven knows what next!"

"Come, uncle; 'tis all very bad, but can't be helped now, and you want rest," said Percy, taking advantage of a pause to persuade the captain to lie down on a couch carried in for his use.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

THE SURRENDER OF WEXFORD.

“ ‘Danger ! Oh, tempt me not to boast !’
The youth exclaimed. ‘Thou little know’st
What he can brave who, born and nurst
In danger’s paths, has dar’d her worst ;
Upon whose ear the signal word
Of strife and death is hourly breaking ;
Who sleeps with head upon the sword
His fever’d hand must grasp in waking.’”

FIRE WORSHIPPERS.

THE morning sun rose clear and silvery upon the town of Enniscorthy, as at the self-same hour of yesterday morning basking in the new-born splendour, and animated with the pulse of waking life. To-day its aspect, how changed ! Masses of dead bodies, with ruined *debris* choking the narrow streets ; stately mansions, shapeless heaps of ruins ; fine houses, dingy and desolate, standing with yawning doors wide open, where they had been burst by the fierce invader ; no sound of life breaking the stillness of horror ; and adjacent the pellucid river, calmly winding, through green waving woodlands and sylvan glades, browsed by peaceful herds, its sinuous course to the sea. Indisposed to sleep, yet somewhat rested and recovered from the prostrating effects of the dread scenes in which they had but yet acted a minor part of the day preceding, Flora and Ethel, who shared the same apartment, rose early, and for some time stood looking out of the top window upon the thrilling spectacle before them—Vinegar Hill, a conical eminence, standing in the midst of an extensive amphitheatre of hills, of different form and elevation, receding into distance : some soft and undulating, clothed with verdure and cultivation ; others presenting

a rugged outline, swathed with the deep purple tints of atmospheric hue, casting them into shadowy distance; to the north the ancient castle of Ferns, standing against a blue cone of hill rising loftily above it; and towards the west the lordly summits of Mount Leinster towering over all. But not this panorama of beauty attracted the sad eyes of the cousins, riveted in awe upon the heaving ocean of men arrayed for mortal combat that covered the hill from base to summit, leaving but one bare spot of about a hundred and fifty yards around their mansion, standing, as it were, in the midst of a charmed circle, in which the only object they saw was Kitty, in clean cap and apron, and quite divested of yesterday's repulsive tokens, milking a cow; while Moll Doyle, equally improved in externals, was caressing a lively young bull, which having had a horn broken, and sustained sundry damage in its martial onslaught upon the foe, engaged her kindly sympathy. Feeding the animal with pieces of brown bread, she at length began to apostrophise it, much to the amusement of the unobserved Flora and Ethel:

"My jewel ye are, an' the beauty o' the world. Ye like that bit, ye do, ye crathur, an' if it wor the last bit I had yer welcome to it; for wasn't it yerself helped to clear the inimy afore us, all as one as a rigimint o' dhragoons? An' throth, if I had a snug bit o' ground o' my own, as onet I had, *och hone*, it's a fine life ye'd lade for the rest o' yer days, an' die o' ould age, wid a beautiful collar round yer neck. Musha, Kitty, I wondher how's the poor childhre, Miss Effie, an' my Nelly, an' the little *gosssoon*. I was dhramin' o' 'em last night. Lord sind 'em safe, an' keep 'em out o' the hands o' the yeos—the worst evil could befall 'em."

"Amin, *a chierna!*" responded Kitty, rising up with her pail and turning the cow loose. "Larry is a oute boy, an' niver fear'll keep a sharp look-out, as we cautioned him. Here's my Ned coomin for another pail o' milk for the min, along wid Johnny; they must go to Nancy Brennan an' Sally Nolan, for we've done all our milkin', an' I must keep this for our own use till we hear what's his riverence goin' to do."

"I'm afeard they won't decide upon nothin', so many givin' their opinion, one for one thing, an' another for another," said Moll Doyle. "Well, Johnny, *avouchal*, what's goin' on above?"

"Begorra, it's for all the world like a rookery of crows in a storm," said Johnny Doyle, coming up. "Every gentleman, exceptin' Mистер Miles and Mистер Hugh, that goes wid Father Murphy, wantin' to have his own way, and thinkin' their own plan best, so that no two can agree. It's well if they don't pull the whole thing to pieces, an' make a mess o' it. Have ye any more milk to spare us?"

"No, *alanna*; go to Nancy Brennan; she has four or five cows' milkin'. I wondher Father John lets himself be led or said by thim, he that's able to bate the world."

"An' what is it you want, Ned, *avic*?" said Kitty, coming towards the house with her son, who took the pail to carry for her.

"Mистер Miles sint me over to sind the little dhrummer, Willie Mitchell, to the ladies, wid his compliments, to know if they have any commands, an' how they passed the night, an' to tell you an' Moll to have breakfast for 'em; an' he'll be down himself as soon as he can get away."

"Musha," retorted Kitty, "bad cess to the breakfast I'd get ready if it wor anyone but himself or Mистер Hugh bid it. Breakfast for the inimy, *inagh*!" And with an air of disgust she turned to see what caused Ned to come to a sudden halt, with abashed visage—Flora and Ethel, who, just as they passed; had come out of the front door, were behind her.

"We do not wish you should take the trouble to get breakfast for us," said Flora, gently. "Indeed, we shall not require any."

Kitty, promptly recovering her self-possession, made respectful answer: "Och, in regard o' the throuble, *alanna*, 'tisn't that; an' as far as yerself an' this purty colleen, I'd do more nor that for yez; but I do own id goes agin the grain for me to be civil to the gintlemin; howand-iver, I'll do my best to plaze Mr. Miles and make yez snug. Walk into the parlour, Miss, an' I'll have all ready

in a jiffy." She pointed with her finger to a door on the right, opposite to that occupied by Captain Courtney.

"Thank you," said Flora; and turning to Ned, who stood evidently captivated in the contemplation of beauty, combined with a refined elegance quite new to him: "Have the goodness to bear our best thanks to Mr. O'Byrne and his brother; we have been most comfortable, and shall be so glad to see them when they will do us the pleasure of coming over." Same time she handed a piece of gold to the boy, who, receiving it with blushing hesitation, departed, just as Percy Esmond, not looking particularly refreshed by a bad night's rest and his crippled arm, called over the banisters:

"I say, Florry, what message of compliment are you sending to those d—d rebels? Mind what you are about?"

"Merely a response to a polite inquiry how we passed the night," smiled Flora, looking up. "You would not have me transgress courtesy. But how are you, Percy?"

"Much you care," was the affable reply, as the young lieutenant returned to his room to finish dressing, assisted by the little drummer, while Flora and Ethel went to make inquiries for Captain Courtney, whose wife, meeting them at the door, invited them to enter.

In their abiding dread of being fallen on and murdered by their escort, Captain Courtney and his nephew could not make up their minds to set out for Wexford until they had again seen Father John Murphy, and obtained from him renewed pledge and guarantee of protection. So, having meanwhile breakfasted well and grumbled their fill, they were constrained to wait, and wait in vain, for Father John came not, and it was evident, as day advanced, some great excitement pervaded the mighty host of twenty thousand men, surging in billowy waves around the lofty eminence where multitudinous green banners danced and swayed in the noontide sun, and betimes the loud roar of myriad voices filled the firmament with long-reverberating echoes. But at long last, when patience, well-nigh exhausted, gave scope to new fears and murmurs, Miles and Hugh O'Byrne were announced.

"Where's your priest? Isn't he coming?" growled

Captain Courtney, as they entered. "How long are we to be kept here?"

"Father John," returned Miles, with urbane condescension of look and tone, "is so pressed with engagements, he has deputed us, Captain Courtney, to let you and these ladies know that a deputation from Wexford to our camp is about to return to the city, and if it be your pleasure to accompany a convoy of such undoubted trust, the gentlemen—relatives of my own, not, perhaps, unknown to you—are at hand." He moved as he spoke from the door and John of Dufry, Colclough, and Mr. Blackney of Balielon, with Bagnal Harvey, bowing to the ladies, advanced. The presence of these gentlemen, intimate friends of Captain Courtney, at once restored the equanimity of his spirits and soothed his ruffled temper.

"Ho! Colclough!—Harvey!—my good friends!" he exclaimed. "To what blessed windfall of luck are we indebted for your presence here? You haven't come, I presume, to join the rebels, or to treat for the capitulation of Wexford?"

"Very grieved we are to say we have been the bearers to the insurgents of a flag of truce, which has been rejected," said Colclough; "hence we must return *instantly* with the unwelcome tidings of war."

"The deuce take the insolent squad!" cried Captain Courtney, looking enraged at Miles, who coolly had seated himself beside Flora Esmond, while Hugh stood beside Ethel Courtney. "You don't mean to say your ragged staff have the presumption to believe we'll throw open our gates to their howl? Go 'long! Why didn't you, in the flush of yesterday's haphazard victory, march right on with your horned vanguard and storm the citadel? You might then have had a chance."

"Such, undoubtedly, had been our proceeding," said Miles, laughing, in spite of himself, at the grotesque distortion of the captain's visage in his undignified ire; "but you forget, sir, poor human beings are not endowed with the attributes of demigods; our men, having the same day marched thirty miles, and fought for several hours, as you know, without having partaken of a morsel of food,

were not in condition to essay further emprise. As it is, we had reason to be quite content with our work; and permit me to add, that though you are free to choose, as we have unanimously decided upon marching on Wexford——”

“And taking it,” grinned Percy Esmond, with sardonic sneer.

Miles bowed. “Such is our intention. You, Captain Courtney, and your friends may be more wisely counselled to retain your present quarters than adventure the risk of a thousand perils in a leagured town.”

Captain Courtney, in speechless amazement, was silent, but Percy Esmond made reply, caustic and fierce:

“By Jove, Byrne, your late Donnybrook skirmishes have turned your heads, and I could laugh in scorn at the hurly-burly and *funfaronade* of bombastic lunatics, but that in ‘my mind’s eye’ I see you, with some score of your compeers, dangling from the walls of the fortress, or with heads spiked upon the gates of the city, glaring, ghastly trophies of our triumph, over the Aceldama of carnage below—the piled corpses of your broken hosts, cut down by our guns, weltering in gory havoc on the field. Are you quite mad?”

Miles gravely returned: “A high authority has pronounced that ‘oppression makes the wise man mad;’ hence, if the truth of the saying be applicable in my case, I can only plead that I participate in the distemper, with thousands of my countrymen. Nay, more, it is quite within the sphere of possibility that the unpleasing picture you have just sketched may be dramatised in every *iota*; nevertheless, having found, by sad experience, that no forbearance on our part, not the most abject submission to fate, procured for us tolerance or immunity from persecution from the swarm of petty despots at whose capricious will and disposal our lives, honour, and freedom were placed, and that when one comes to the lowest depth there is no lower—wherefore, each man of us, with our life in our hand, goes forth, conscious that it is only his, while he can bravely hold it, by smiting down his enemy; and all of our host exulting in the thought that if we perish in

the noblest cause that ever nerved a manly arm, on our glorious death-bed we shall have struck a blow whose resound will be heard through the wide world ;—that we shall have immolated to the manes of our fatherland hecatombs of tyrants, and enrolled our names on history's page, side by side with the best and bravest that ever drew brand in the sacred cause of liberty, whether the scene of action were Greece, Carthage, Rome, or Britain ; or the heroes, Hector, Hannibal, Brutus, or Caractacus."

As he poured forth the rushing tide of impassioned eloquence Miles rose to depart, but on the threshold again he paused, and confronting Esmond, said : " Once again, sir, take in good part the caution I give : provide for the safety of all with whose defence you are charged, nor be influenced by overweening confidence in your own well-equipped phalanx, or betrayed, in scorn of our rude levies, to underrate the might that slumbers in a wronged peasant's arm. No dastards they in combat, for beneath every ragged garment heaves a bosom inspired with the *prestige* of hereditary glory, and in every vein throbs a life-stream derived from source and lineage more ancient, chivalrous, and princely than that of the best that circulates among yours. Farewell !"

Beckoning Hugh to follow, he strode with lordly air from the apartment, pursued by the gaze of the dumb-stricken auditors, absolutely petrified into silence.

" A desperate man that !" murmured Captain Courtney, looking at Blackney of Balielon, who shook his head in mute response.

" By Jove, he's moonstruck !" cried Esmond, with a dry laugh. " Come, let's get ready to march for Wexford ;—ho ! uncle, how shall we transport you ? It behoves us to get the start of the victors and their bullocks. Bless my heart !—what a rabble ! Princes, too, by the glory of Solomon ! So, Colclough and Harvey, their highnesses refused to entertain your beggarly embassy ? Glad of it ;—it will give us work to do to thin the Croppies."

" I thought, dear, you said you would go to Dublin," said Mrs. Courtney, who did not feel quite so sanguine on the subject of thinning the Croppies, and who had a very

nervous apprehension of encountering another day similar to that of Enniscorthy. "Do let us get up to Dublin: we shall be safer there."

"I believe you're crazed, Lucy! Is it take that journey with all my ribs broken!" cried the captain, in amazement at such proposition.

"Nonsense, uncle! You've only one rib broken," said his nephew. "Don't be making mountains out of mole-hills. Macnamara said so."

"And do you think I minded what the Irish ignoramus said, sir?" shouted the captain. "Don't I know myself? Confound the lot of you, for unfeeling—oh!—oh! By Jove! maybe those brigands aren't so bad, after all; shouldn't wonder if they had some good in them—some heart. At any rate let's get on to Wexford. Where's Florry? Gone, I'll engage, to pack. Like all you women, selfish—minding only herself. What are we going to do now?"

Leaving the party to settle the question, we shall follow the maligned Flora, who had slipped from the room unnoticed, after the exit of Miles, and approaching where he lingered a moment at the hall-door, giving some direction to Ned Burke, she, soon as she drew his attention, timidly accosted him:

"I suppose," she said, while in her tone there was a melancholy vibration that engaged his earnest interest, "it would not be quite the thing for me to wish well to your success; but be assured, none will more truly sympathise in whatsoever tide of fortune befall; and though I might not rejoice for your triumph, I should be deeply grieved for your disaster."

"Then, lady," returned Miles, bending low, and benignly smiling, "yours of all will be the only heart that shall so feel, and very grateful it is to mine to know that there is one, even one, so kind and noble, that if it may not feel with us can feel for us, and at least not censure if it do not appreciate our struggle, not for supremacy, but for freedom to exist enfranchised from galling bondage in our own land."

"You should not be impugned for such endeavour."

she returned ; "but admitting all the justice of your plea, and the valour of your host, their resources for protracted warfare appear so limited one almost trembles for the issue. Is it imperative upon you to risk your own life and fortune on a stake in which so many are listed ?"

"Would you have me, fair syren," he answered, "desert my brethren-in-arms, and withhold my aid in hour of need from the brunt of trial ?—that were recreancy unutterable. No ; it may be our destiny to lose the day, but though we perish our renown will survive in story : we must not be reft of that, or show a blemished honour, unworthy even of the regard of Florence Esmond, whose esteem I prize next to my own."

He touched her hand to his lip, and was gone, to overtake Hugh and Ned Burke, who had set forward, while Flora, strangely moved, slowly returned to the parlour, to meet Percy starting in quest of some sort of conveyance to carry them to Wexford.

Wexford, the capital of the county, situated about eleven miles south-west of Enniscorthy, fortified by town-wall and massive arches, in which ponderous gates once had stood, and defended by a strong garrison, exhibited an extraordinary scene when the news arrived of the destruction of the "North Cork," and the rumoured approach of the victorious insurgents. Consternation seized upon all classes of the inhabitants ; business was suspended, and the streets were choked with a wild concourse of civilians and militia, traders, mechanics, gentry, soldiers, all commingled in promiscuous confusion, hurrying to and fro, or congregated in debating groups, while the air re-echoed with the cries of children, the lamentations of relatives for their slain, and the oaths and imprecations of would-be avengers of their comrades ; while, in the very midst of the discordant clamour, ere long fresh tidings poured in of the defeat of the garrison of Enniscorthy, over which, by-and-by, dense clouds of smoke, discernible from many points, gave fearful evidence of the conflagration of the town, long before throngs of fainting fugitives in heterogeneous mass, footsore, and breathless, hastening thither for shelter, proclaimed the dire event, and in various picture magnified the immensity of the slaughter with the irresist-

ible courage and inhuman ferocity of the foe. Then pale dismay supervening upon extravagant braggadocio of courage and defiance gave a new turn to policy, menaces of wrath and boastful vauntings were hushed, while the panic-stricken inhabitants, with their stout defenders, agreed to the humiliating alternative of deputing an embassy to the insurgents, beseeching them to forbear an attack upon the city, which silly fear-begotten overture had the very effect of promoting the catastrophe they had sought to avert. The insurgents, hitherto divided in council, fused into unanimous resolve to fall at once upon the citadel, and despatched the delegates with the intimation of their inexorable purpose, while that very evening the insurgents set out, and encamped for the night upon a ridge of the Forth Mountains, called the "Three Rocks," situated about three miles from their destination. Having posted sentinels, each man lay down to rest upon his pike or musket, beneath a starless canopy, his head pillowed upon the rock, and his cheek fanned by the cold, dewy breeze. It was a night of intense darkness, and the ruddy blaze of a watch-fire showed the dark form of Miles O'Byrne standing leaning upon his musket, with dusky visage, fixed in deep thought, solemnly gazing upon the figure of the two priests striving to read their breviary by the flickering light, and the multitudinous sleepers stretched in every posture around, while at his feet lay Hugh, beside Ned Burke, in heavy slumber, his unconscious head resting where the boy had placed it, upon his own bosom. Yet Ned was not asleep: from time to time he unclosed his eyes, and looked drowsily at Miles, too restless and anxious with many cares to need repose. Thus the hours wore on till morning dawned: and with the first beam of light arose a cry from one of the sentinels upon the pinnacle of the rock. Instantly a horn sounded, and every man of the sleeping host was on his feet.

"A large squadron of the line marching from Duncannon towards Wexford!" shouted Johnny Doyle, the sentinel.

"Bad luck to 'em! that they may never go back," responded his mother, Moll Doyle, scared with Kitty and some other female warriors from their couch at hand.

"Up, Clooney and Kelly of Killane," cried Father John, with eagle flashing eye. "Take a band of pikes, and intercept them. We must get on to Wexford, hap what may."

Responsive to the call, two men of fine soldierly bearing stepped forth, and placed themselves at the head of their company, already fallen into rank. The leaders one moment conferred together, then shouted :

"Down banners, and march to ambuscade !"

Instantly every green banner disappeared, and Father John, as he viewed the stately column file down the hill, like a turbid stream of swift-running water, turned to Gerald Byrne, who had just come up from his station, and said, proudly : "God's benison be upon them ! In the whole world they have no peers, these gallant youths !"

A detachment of the Meath Militia, with three officers, in advance of the main body, soon came within reach of the ambushed insurgents, who, swooping from copse and jungle upon the troops, soon proved again their matchless might in brief, stern struggle with the British soldier. Again victory crowned their arms : the whole detachment was cut off, and two pieces of cannon became the prize of the conquerors, while General Fawcett, the commander of the squadron, hearing of the defeat of the advance corps, instead of continuing his route to Wexford, effected a hasty retreat to Duncannon Fort.

The ancient town of Wexford was now a theatre of warlike preparation, reinforcements of the Donegal Militia under Colonel Maxwell, with the Heathfield Yeoman Cavalry under Captain Grogan, the Taghmon Cavalry under Captain Cox, and later on several officers, announcing the approach of other regiments, came pouring into the town, already bristling with formidable artillery. Yet not all these hopeful prognostics could allay or assuage the alarm of the Orange oligarchy, whose dreams, no doubt, were disturbed by visions of murdered peasants, craving vengeance for ruined homes and tortured limbs. The most extraordinary measures were taken to provide for their safety, and scouts were incessantly on foot to give notice of the approach of the foe. All night long the

streets echoed to the heavy tramp of the military passing to and fro, and the terrified murmurs of the inhabitants, anticipating the coming storm. Again deputies were sent to the "Three Rocks" to treat with the insurgents, and again finding their leaders unrelenting—warned, moreover, by signals of their approach, the flight of the yeoman cavalry and infantry, with the loss of their commander, Colonel Watson, shot at Belmont, and other tokens—without further delay the garrison, now presenting the aspect of an "armed mob, confused, disorderly, and terrified, but cruel and truculent even in the extremity of their terror, were the first to quit the town, setting fire to their barracks as they abandoned it;" while the yeomanry delayed their departure, destroying the ammunition they could not carry with them, and plundering some houses and burning others; their officers displaying equal cowardice, divesting themselves of their uniforms and replacing them with such mean garments as they could procure, in their headlong flight to seek some spot of shelter or concealment. During this scene of confusion, plainly visible to the perception of the insurgents—advanced as near as Ferrybank—the new deputation, having failed to dissuade them from approaching the town, now stipulated on the part of those who sent them that the town, with all the arms and ammunition it contained, should be delivered up to the captors, on the sole condition that the lives of the inhabitants should be spared! To these terms the insurgents agreed, and at once setting forward, rending the air with acclamations, the peasant army entered the city, amazed to find it already evacuated by the military and a great number of people, while the trembling residue, whom circumstances incapacitated for flight, merging for the time being their Orange antipathies, flung wide their portals, and exhibited the wildest demonstrations of welcome to the despised Croppy insurgents, who, while heartily amused at the wondrous facility with which, like the chameleon, the orange hue changed to green—green boughs in every hand, green cockades on every hat—were not deceived by the mean concession and treacherous adulation extorted from fear. So, while filling

the lately desolate town with joy and gaiety, they freely partook of the plenteous hospitality and revelled in the ovation provided in their honour, they kept wary eyes about them, obliged the host of the banquet to pledge them beforehand in the wine-cup, and courteously invited him to the first taste of his own viands set before them. No riot, no pillage marred the convivial hour. Sole holocaust to the vengeance of years was the mansion of one obnoxious and notorious persecutor, Captain Boyd of Wexford, of which they made a bonfire; and but two lives were immolated, in salutary warning to evil-doers, viz., John Boyd, brother to the captain, and George Sparrow, both men of infamous character, who were piked on the quay. But amid the affectionate effusions lavished by the Orange population upon their now dearly-beloved Popish brethren, none shared so large an amount of popularity as the priest—good worthy soul! To make much of him was now expedient, to drown in Lethe the memory of former bad charges, and expunge in the Marah of contrition a long scroll of bad reminiscences was indispensable. So Father Michael Murphy, along with Sinnott of Kilbride, O'Duffy, Clooney, and Gerald Byrne, feasted and made merry at the hospitable board of one Samuel Ferguson, a wealthy merchant in the Bull-ring of Wexford; while Father John, standing with Hugh and Miles O'Byrne, Kelly of Killane, Kieran O'Hart, and Ned Burke, had not yet decided among the many urgent invitations pressing upon them which to select, so interested were they in witnessing a little domestic episode of intense interest. O'Loughlin, the quondam Newgate felon, in a fit of wild exultation, brandishing the pike that had more than avenged his wrecked dwelling, and secured his own freedom, was cutting a series of capers, and displaying sundry evolutions of a military character, for the amusement of Miles de Lacy and Donogh O'Brien, prior to accepting a proposal from a comfortable widow to do her the honour of dining at her father's tavern, when all at once he came to a standstill, dropped his weapon, threw up his arms, uttered a shout, and rushed forward, as a mendicant woman, with a child on her back and three more following at her heels, came

along the street. Leaping forward he caught the bundle of rags—that is child and mother—in a frantic embrace, and crying, “It’s herself!—it’s the wife an’ childhre!” The woman thus accosted in her turn set up a yell, in which all the minor keys joined lustily, and soon every note of the gamut was giving out an uproarious vocal concert, bass and treble, sharp and flat striving for mastery, and producing a babel of sound, in the midst of which Miles, turning to address a gentleman who entreated the party to favour him with their company, accidentally glanced up at a window, and with pleased emotion, not unmingled with some surprise, saw Florence Esmond smiling beside her aunt and cousin, while Captain Courtney and Percy Esmond, in the background, looked on, dogged and sullen. Miles was soon decided.

“Come, Father John, let us go in here and have our dinner; our other friends must excuse us.”

“But, my dear boy,” said Father John, looking up and recognising the ladies, “we’ll not be welcome; we have not been invited to partake of any refreshment in this the only mansion which does not parade the olive branch, the immortal green, in our honour.”

“Never mind;—come on,” said Miles, knocking at the door, while Kelly of Killane went off to join some of his own friends.

“How comes it, lad,” cried Father Murphy, addressing the frightened-looking waiter who opened the door, “that this is the only house that has offered us no *cead mille failthe*?—not glad to see us, maybe? Think we look like thieves come to rob you, eh?”

“No, yer holy riverince,” stammered Giles Butterworth, shaking in every limb. “But—but—this is the hotel, and all the families but one has left, and we was expectin’ Lord Kingsborough.”

“Oh! indeed. Well, don’t be frightened, we won’t hurt you; but if Lord Kingsborough comes, give us notice, that we may take him prisoner. Show the way to the apartments occupied by Captain Courtney, and get us something to eat.”

“Certainly, your holy riverince,” cried the waiter,

drawing freer breath, and adding, as he closed the door, "won't the other young gentleman come in, sir?"

"Certainly," returned Miles, perceiving Ned Burke discreetly gliding away. He called after him: "Come back, Ned. As we wish for private conference with our friends, take the young gentleman to some room, and see that he has all he requires. How the tables are turned," he whispered aside to Hugh, as they followed Father John to the saloon, upon entering which the latter addressed Captain Courtney, reclining in an arm-chair:

"How now, my friend? This is a churlish reception: no trophies of welcome, no green cockades, nor word of greeting, much less the fraternal embrace of citizens emancipated from a thralldom they disliked, by our victorious arms. Pray, ladies, let us not keep you standing," and Father John unceremoniously seated himself *vis-a-vis* to the captain, who, coolly using a toothpick, heard him to the end, then said, laconically:

"Tell me, do all your fellows carry amulets?"

"Amulets! What sort? Against broken ribs? I should first have asked for yours."

"All right;—mending. But what I mean is, by what magic or necromancy have you turned all our lions into hares?"

Father John laughed heartily. "My dear sir, you are right. We do bear the magic wand of a good cause against a bad one: gates of proof cannot withstand that."

"I daresay; and you may believe me when I tell you I admire the pluck of your gallant fellows: they are soldiers every inch; and glad I am they have thrashed and kicked our yelping ours before them. But if you expect us to demean ourselves by joining the paltry rabble in their buffoonery and mummary of welcome, fictitious as their false grimaces of smiles and pleasure, we won't—not to purchase your favour, though our lives were the forfeit. Now you understand why we made no demonstration."

"I do, and honour your bold spirit and manly independence," said Father John, taking a pinch of snuff and handing the box to the captain, who cordially accepted

the calumet of peace, while Percy Esmond smiling, yet ironically, inquired of Miles :

"May it please your victorship to inform us as to your next intentions?"

"For the present you are prisoners of war, and must abide our pleasure," answered Miles, coldly.

Percy's brow fell. "Then," he added, "these ladies must be sent up to Dublin under safe convoy, since they, of course, are not included in the category?"

"Pardon me; they are our captives, too," said Miles, "and must be retained as hostages for your good faith."

"Humph!" ejaculated the captain, while Percy Esmond looked absolutely petrified with indignation, Mrs. Courtney frightened, and Flora and Ethel gazed wistfully, yet not mistrustful, on the sombre visage of the speaker.

Flora was the first to break silence, saying in her own silvery accents, and with much of that stately grace which characterised Miles himself: "I do not apprehend we shall have a very stern gaoler hence?"

"Nonsense! nonsense, Florry!" rudely interposed her brother; "what do you know about it? Like you, silly girls, full of romance and stuff!"

With cheek dyed vermillion at the rebuke, Florence sunk into abashed silence.

Miles haughtily made response: "Miss Esmond has but expressed the natural sentiments of an upright mind. Confess, sir, if yours be a candid one, that had the fortune of this day reversed placed us at your mercy, that neither youth, beauty, sex nor age had escaped the brutality of your licentious soldiery, and that every cry for mercy had been stifled in the city's reeking blood!"

"Faith, I'll corroborate that," said Captain Courtney. "If you go on as you have begun we haven't so much to complain of."

"Ay, if they do!" sneered Percy.

"And I'm sure we've no reason to doubt it," put in Mrs. Courtney. "We have met nothing but civility and kindness from these gentlemen."

The gentlemen all bowed.

"That's very true," said Captain Courtney. "And now,

my dear, let us make amends for our dilatory hospitality, and ask them to dine—it wants but a few minutes to six.”

“Pray, don’t put yourselves about; we have ordered something below,” said Father Murphy.

“Nonsense!—you’ll dine with us,” said Captain Courtney, and drink to our better acquaintance. I say, Miles—Miles Byrne, isn’t that your name?”

“Miles O’Byrne, sir; that’s my name.”

“Yes, just so; only for brevity sake, you see. Tell me, what you have done with those she-soldiers of yours?”

“Joan of Arc and her Spartan friend?” laughed Miles.

“Ay, why have you so christened her? The Spartan was angry, I remember.”

“The woman—Kitty Burke is her name—by her wit and courage saved a party of us from being infallibly massacred by a troop of yeomen, who had assailed us. She left us immediately after we entered Wexford, to go with her friend, Moll Doyle, and her son Larry, to look after two children, who, with a little sister of Hugh’s and mine, and one or two others, we had left in a place of temporary shelter some miles beyond Enniscorthy. I hope they will find all safe and well; but I sometimes feel unhappy, and not without reason, considering the state of the country.”

At this moment the waiter came in to announce dinner. Mrs. Courtney took Father Murphy’s arm, Hugh presented his to Ethel, and Miles walked in the rear beside Florence, who whispered as they went:

“You are so good, so very good, I do not fear to ask a favour of you. I feel ashamed of Percy for being so cross; but he is not always so; only out of temper just now. You will be patient with him?”

“Save in matter of overt insult, for your sake I will,” he softly answered.

At the door of the diningroom, Mrs. Courtney and Father Murphy having entered, the rest were brought to a standstill by Ned Burke in the passage, beckoning to Hugh, and with significant gesture whispering some words in his ear. Hugh made some assenting response, with mien suddenly serious; then, as the party moved on and took their places at the table, observing the discomposed

and anxious faces of the company, smiling he said, as casually his eye met Percy Esmond's:

"That chap of ours seems to be under some apprehension of our being played the same trick that Cromwell played upon Owen Roe O'Neill, and stopped me to impart a timely caution to temperance."

"That's to say, in plain speech, the varlet insinuates we have drugged the wine-cup," exclaimed Percy, with bitter laugh. "No need for the last extremity of the coward, so long as a good sword is ours to wield. Let him who fears our treason eschew the draught."

Hugh and Miles, in mute deprecation of such suspicion, filled up their glasses from separate decanters and drank.

"Here's to peace and goodwill among us!" cried Father John, lifting a brimming goblet. Captain Courtney responded freely, but Percy Esmond stubbornly, meeting the arrogant and haughty bearing with which Miles and Hugh had long deemed it incumbent upon them to maintain their position, assailed by contumely and the supercilious pretensions of conventional superiority and assuming power, and resisting every overture save that characterised by the humble demeanour of acknowledged inferiority, irascibly declined to join in the toast, saying, as he pushed away his empty glass:

"Time enough, when we come to a better understanding."

"Which will never be," said Hugh, carving a quarter of lamb, "while bad laws maintain a strife of creed and a code of cast in the country."

"Should it be your fortune, which I daresay you count upon, to get possession of the country, you will reverse all that," cried Percy, helping his aunt to some mint sauce.

"We'll reverse a good deal," said Miles, cutting a ham. "We'll make a sectarian parliament throw open its doors, not to the pets of a faction, but to the representatives of a nation. We shall put an end to the tithe system of an alien church, and abolish penal disabilities, imposed upon us by an alien government, and make the land habitable to all classes."

"And cast the alien government adrift, and set up king and court of your own, and renew again the reign of Cormac, and Neil, and the glories of Tara and Emania. Oh!"

"In which grand exploit, were you of our Milesian blood," laughed Miles, "we should have your co-operation; and if in the hurly-burly the crown fell at my feet," he added, turning playfully to Florence, "I would set it on your head and, with a gold wand of sovereignty you should rule your lieges; but, alas! I fear me, 'tis too late in the day to build castles in the air, and we must be content if we can secure for ourselves the footing of free men within the olden realm of princes."

"Faith, I'm not so sure of that," said Captain Courtney, dissecting a chicken; "you seem to me, like great Cæsar, to have but to say, '*Veni—vidi—vici.*' Our craven hearts have given you good foundation to build upon, in which case I bespeak the crown for my Ethel."

"No, no, uncle," laughed Florence, merrily, "it is promised to me, and I claim it."

"Well, now, that's hard," returned Ethel, pouting, "and I so ambitious to be a queen."

"I think you're all mad, and your ambition may culminate in—in ——" and Percy Esmond, darkly frowning, broke short his sentence.

"Oh, spare our nerves the climax," said Miles, with mock solemnity. "'A rebel's fortune—an outlaw's cave,' you would not like that, fair ladies? And yet I know a rebel and an outlaw's bride who would not change her lot to be Empress of Imperial Rome when Rome, like Erin, boasted of such honour;—no, indeed, she would not."

"A good many wives must share such felicity just now," said Captain Courtney.

"But she of whom I speak," said Miles, "is the wife of my friend, O'Dwyer of Donard."

"What!" exclaimed Percy Esmond, astounded "You don't mean that Dwyer, a peasant's son, a nobody, a priced outlaw, you don't call him your friend?"

"I do;—why not? A peasant's son, you say? The clan O'Dwyer dates from farthest antiquity; and Michael

is a lineal descendant of Ugani Mor, Ardrigh of Leinster, and common ancestor of most of its leading Celtic family. What though the usurper to-day lord it in the halls and over the patrimony of the plundered Gael ; can we not discern beneath the temporary rags or coarse frieze that obscures it the purple that shall never cease to invest them ? O'Dwyer is not a nobody—bear witness the price of a thousand pounds offered by Government for his head ;—nor is he a rude hind, an unlettered boor, a cipher of mean capacity, he who, like our friend here, leads the thousands at the wave of his hand, and whose name, even now inscribed in story, may yet compete with that of Tell in the annals of patriot fame. But truce with politics which make us angry. Can we devise no gentler theme wherewith to entertain our fair friends, who should justly detest us for our belligerent propensities ?” and turning to Florence, he adroitly shifted the conversation, saying : “ The first time we had the pleasure to meet at Lady Moira’s how little either of us anticipated then the future’s erratic course. Truly we are children of destiny, let who will gainsay it.”

Then launching into general conversation, suggested by the reminiscence, even Percy’s gloom abated, and by the time they separated for the night all parties seemed on mutual good terms. The Courtneys withdrew in peace to rest, the city walls were sentinelled, and Miles, worn out with nights of vigil and days of toilsome march and stern conflict, retired to repose and dream of Florence Esmond.

CHAPTER XXXV.

PLOTS AND EVENTS.

"Sleep, sleep, O city ! though within
The circuit of your walls there lies
No habitation free from sin,
And all its nameless miseries :
The aching heart, the aching head,
Grief for the living and the dead,
And foul corruption of the time,
And crimes and passions that may grow
Until they ripen into crime."—GOLDEN LEGEND.

WHILE in scenes of sterner action Mars, with brand uplifted, rules the hour, and Bellona waves her fiery torch over embattled hosts and leaguered towns, renewing the days of olden Greece and Rome upon Irish ground, no less is the metropolis of the nation the arena of jarring discord, where the sub-deities, Harpies, and Furies, presiding in full divan, marshal their forces, and array their legions, goaded to deadly strife beneath the banner of each conflicting passion, racked brains and envenomed hearts supplying from incandescent forge an armoury of weapons, ingenious and multiplied, complicated and tremendous, as the mechanism of the human mind. In their sphere, Castlereagh and his courtly minions, the magnates of the land, with fraud, and wile, and ukase, still work every pliant engine to achieve their darling scheme, coldly callous to a nation's agonies, and the future ruin of their posterity, while subserving their own petty selfish present interest ; for basely bartered honour and country no cheek blushes, a pain of remorse moves no torpid conscience. On ! on ! is still the cry, to the bitter end.

Within the circuit of her own centre, Lady Alicia Luttrell, no nearer to her aim and object than when she had first set out, but rendered more impassioned and self-willed by resistance, now casting off all reserve, is as desperately intent upon accomplishing her favourite project, and determined to remove every obstacle thereto, callous to what crime and suffering must be involved to herself and others in the transaction. Could they have been analysed and compared, no doubt the characters of Lord Castlereagh and Lady Alicia Luttrell would have presented a good facsimile. Circumstance, too, conspired to favour the development of each tactician's ability for intrigue. Just now, Dublin, among many scandals that supply the daily bread of the omnivorous devourer of such food, was the emporium of one unusually singular, and hence more appetising, than any of more hackneyed fashion. Matters, since we last saw them, had not improved between Guildford Colandisk and his wife; each day she became more coarsely violent, while he, disappointed and enraged, launched freely into every excess of guilt and folly, until mutual re- crimination, shattering every vestige of domestic harmony, menaced an immediate rupture between them, when Mrs. Damer fell seriously ill. In a day or two her life was despaired of; and feeling her end approach, in a paroxysm of terror she conjured her husband to send for the parson and a magistrate, as she had a disclosure to make, and an act of restitution, before she could see a priest, and die in the Church which she had so long abjured. Her desire was complied with. Magistrate and parson arrived to take down her deposition; which was: That having been childless for some years, finding her husband discontent, and wishing to alienate his interest from his next-of-kin, with whom she did not agree, she had prevailed upon a poor woman with a large family, who kept a basket of apples at Ballybough Bridge, for a sum of money in hand, and a weekly stipend, to give up, and make over an infant of which she would soon be confined, as her own. Between two or three parties the business was managed, and the child of Peggy Dobbs and Jack Dobbs, a knife-grinder, was transferred to the Damers, and up to this hour had passed

as their own. The extraordinary confession of the dying lady, treated at first as death-bed ravings by many, was, however, clearly proved upon the arrest of all the parties implicated in the transaction, who, being questioned, admitted the circumstances without contradiction; and the no longer heiress, cashiered by the indignant Damer, with a small sum of money, retired in humiliation from the stage of her short-lived consequence; while the astonished Colandiak, losing his head in the ebullition of ecstasy at his most unexpected emancipation from a galling yoke, made all expedition to fling himself again at the feet of Alphonse Fitzpatrick. Hastening to her uncle's mansion, and rushing up stairs, without waiting to question, he collided with the butler, coming down with a tray of glasses and decanters, and capsize the caravan with a crash that brought Don Antonio, Hussey Burgh, and O'Driscoll, with Father Fitzpatrick, flying to the scene of accident.

"My back!" groaned the butler, rubbing his loin, as Hussey Burgh tenderly assisted him to rise.

"I'm very sorry," apologised Colandiak, wiping a bloody nose. "I was in such haste;—I have such good news;—I want to see Miss Fitzpatrick;—I didn't know there was company"—and he scowled at O'Driscoll.—"Be so good as to let her know I am here. I wish to see her alone;—I'll wait in the parlour;" and he stooped to help the silently ferocious butler to pick up the broken glass.

"Alphonse, there's a madman below wants to see you," said Don Antonio, returning to the drawingroom, and addressing his niece, as smiling in the perfection of loveliness she sat beside Lady O'Driscoll.

"A madman wants to see me, uncle! Who is he?"

"Go down to him; 'tis that idiot, Guildford Colandiak," said Father Fitzpatrick, holding his sides in a paroxysm of laughter he could not repress.

Alphonse drew back, heightening her beauty with a frown. "I'll not go to him, Patrick; you should have said I was engaged."

Hussey Burgh now laughed vehemently, and reiterated: "Go down. What are you afraid of? He

has smashed all the glass, and wants to make good the damage."

"Another overture, I'll wager," whispered O'Driscoll, who since Alphonse's accession of wealth had studiously avoided renewing his former suit, and had indeed, while retaining the same admiration and love of his object, now abandoned all idea of it as useless; while his mother, on the contrary, made it the dream of her life.

"Oh, come you must, else he'll come up here and electrify us all with some rhodomontade; for I think he's primed," said Don Antonio, sedately.

Alphonse rose, looking disconcerted; Hussey Burgh hastened to open the door for her, and restored the bloom to her cheek, saying: "I'd give a guinea to have my ear to the keyhole. What a pity to let you have all the fun solo!—do fetch him up, and let's see Bacchus in love."

Alphonse went down to the parlour, framing her mode of speech and action, like a skilful general arranging his tactics, to be foiled by an unforeseen countermove of the enemy. Soon as she appeared, cold and serene, Colandisk bounced forward, and caught her in his arms, wildly exclaiming:

"It's all settled, my *hourî* (my angel). I'm rid of the incubus, and we'll be happy as the day's long. Now, there, don't be acting the froward child; I've been a naughty boy, and I ask pardon, and promise to be a pattern for the rest of my life. Come, don't be angry, and fret; it's own Guildford."

"I really do not know what you mean, Mr. Colandisk," cried Alphonse, breaking violently away, and surveying him with marble rigidity of aspect that would infallibly have disheartened any more sensitively constituted individual; but Guildford, cased, like the armadillo in a coat of armour, was invulnerable.

"Not know what I mean;—yes you do, you little rogue"—he put on the same captivating smile that had once allured her novice heart.—"Hasn't all Dublin for the last week been ringing with it? Didn't I, at the first click of the pistol, cut and run; and to-day, just an hour ago, it has been decided that the woman is not Damer's daughter,

but the daughter of Dobbs the knife-grinder and his wife Peggy, the apple-woman of Ballybough Bridge. Now, don't you pity me to have been so taken in?"

"I do not pity you in the least, Mr. Colandisk; but I very much pity the poor young woman; and it will be only right and proper of you, under circumstances which neither of you could have foreseen, to act a manly and Christian part, and by your sympathy and fidelity make her as happy as you can."

"What do you mean?—Is it marry the apple-woman's daughter?"

"You are married to her," said Alphonse, boldly.

"Tut, you spiteful little elf; I married the daughter, as I believed, of Mr. Damer, not of Dobbs the knife-grinder. No law can bind me to abide by an imposition."

"But is it fair to take advantage of such a quibble. Had you married me as wealthy Alphonse Fitzpatrick, and I turned out to be, not another in person, but in name, you would have deserted me too."

"Never!" ejaculated Guildford, theatrically striking his bosom. "Never! as I'm a man of honour. I would still have loved, as I love you now, to distraction; but that woman I hated from the first."

"Why did you marry her?"

"You know I couldn't help it," he replied, with charming frankness. "I was cleaned out. That beast, Jeremiah Higgenboggan, left away the money to dogs and donkeys that would have made us snug. Carry had the balloons; she fell in love with me, wheedled and bamboozled, and—and so I couldn't help myself, and she took forcible possession."

"Well, if you take my advice, you'll go back to her, and live quietly and happily. You have quite sufficient means of your own to carry on respectable appearance; and I'm sure Mr. Damer will not be unkind to one so long—at least we will say an adopted daughter."

"By Jove! there's fine advice," exclaimed Guildford, indignantly. "No, no," he continued, with a much agrieved air; "I have a character to sustain, which

prohibits me from maintaining connection with fictitious persons; moreover, think, good Lord, of the *entourage* of relations, and these sort of people have whole colonies. No, if you please. But, you provoking fair, you only say it to tantalise me, and make me love you more, if it were possible."

"Oh, you need not love me, Mr. Colandisk," she quickly rejoined, "for it will serve no purpose."

"Yes, but it will, though," he as swiftly returned. "You are your own mistress. Your uncle, Don Antonio—fine old fellow!—has, I hear, settled upon you sixty thousand pounds, besides a large sum to your brother, which, he being a priest, and not having children, will, of course, revert to you. Now, you know you love me: you remember how grieved you were when that infernal Jerry stepped between us; so let's have no more childish play about it;—name the happy day that will make Dungarvan shake;—there's a dear,"

"Mr. Colandisk," returned Alphonse, severely, "once for all, there must be an end to this folly. A few months' severe tuition have lessoned me at last in wisdom and experience. I am not the silly child you last saw me, dazzled with the glitter of a toy, and covetous of its possession. Henceforth, understand me definitively: we meet in public only on the formal ground of most ceremonious acquaintance; if you transgress that boundary, we must pass by as strangers."

"You inexorable despot, you are not serious?" cried Guildford, sobered by her stern, imperturbable tone, which impressed a conviction of her deliberate purpose upon his mind. "See, I know what you're at," he blurted out, in his awakened dread of losing the prize: "you want to make a convert of me by holding out. All right, I'm just as willing to go to chapel as to church;—indeed, I'd just as soon be a Catholic as a Protestant, for hang me! if I see any difference between them, except that the Papists fast, which, I suppose, makes them stubborn and melancholy: so there's every impediment to our happiness removed, and ——" The door opening cut him short

“Soon as you are disengaged, Alphonse, uncle wishes to see you,” said Father Fitzpatrick, bowing to Colandisk, whom he only knew by sight and hearsay.

“I am going now, Patrick,” she replied, courtesying as she withdrew.

Guildford desperately threw himself between her and the door: “Alphonse, I won’t stand this,” he cried, and looked appealingly to Father Fitzpatrick. “She’s engaged to me, sir—she can’t deny it. I’ve done everything: I’ve pledged myself to become a convert, to go to Mass with her, or turn Mahommedan, or anything she likes! Won’t you be my friend, and advise her? I’ll make it worth your while; faith, I will;—you won’t have such a saint in your Church.”

“I daresay not, sir,” smiled the priest. “Go up, Alphonse, to uncle.”

“Then, priest, you encourage her in her fickleness?—you sanction breach of faith; you don’t care to make a convert, or to save a soul from perdition. Your religion is all a sham! I’ll go home and shoot myself;—you’ll see it in to-morrow’s paper, by Jove!—and you’ll have my blood to answer for, you diabolical priest!”

Guildford Colandisk, as he spoke in the wild incoherence of excitement, took no heed of the key to which he had pitched his voice; hence, rushing frantically forth, followed by Father Fitzpatrick, deliberate and amazed, and Alphonse, pale and resolute, he was taken aback at sight of Hussey Burgh and O’Driscoll, who were coming down stairs, and on the last step, crimson and shaking with suffocated laughter. Hussey, ever alert in wit and fun, suddenly composing his features to an expression of deep condolence, addressed him:

“Then, my poor fellow, it is all settled, and you are again a bachelor; but don’t go shoot yourself in a fit of despair: you are young, and the world is green yet; cheer up, you have not culled its last flower, and you’ll soon find another to adorn your bosom.”

“Buffoon!” muttered Colandisk between his set teeth, as he pulled his hat over his eyes, and set off, not in quest of his pistol, but his friend and confidante, Lady Alicia,

to take counsel with her, and pour into her sympathetic ear the story of his trouble ; while Hussey Burgh gravely said, in tone of pointed significance, meant for Alphonse ;

“ Woe betide the ill-destined being that may be ever beguiled to trust her fate to the keeping of as soulless, heartless, brainless, and selfish a man as ever I knew, without one fixed principle for his polestar !—a shroud were her fitter wedding robe.”

Guildford Colandisk found Lady Alicia in her drawing-room, perusing a novel. Between Don Antonio’s residence and that of Lady Alicia his distress, not being very deep-rooted, had cooled down and evaporated, though the chagrin of disappointment remained rankling in his heart. With composed aspect, however, he entered, and gallantly made his obeisance to the lady, who, closing her book, quietly addressed him :

“ I thought you’d never come. What delayed you so long ? Those grumpies, the Higgenboggans, have been here and told me the news : Poor Carry’s restored to her joyful parents, and you’ve escaped your shackles ;—better luck than you deserved.”

“ Now, if you’re going to lecture me, by George, I’ll take up my hat and go !—I’m not in humour to be pulled up just now.”

Lady Alicia smiled sarcastically. “ What ails you ? Sorry for pigeon metamorphosed into an owl ? What a strange story the whole thing !—a perfect romance. Do you know I always had the feeling that there was something odd about that girl—that, in fact, she was something out of place—below par ? I wonder will she turn to selling apples ? I’ll certainly patronise her, if it were only to spite the Pomfrets, who hated her, and will be so glad of her reverse. But you’ve had no luncheon ;—just ring the bell. I declare I should be sorry for you, only I know your heart is set upon pretty Alphonse Fitzpatrick and her fine fortune. What luck you are in !—and how glad we shall be to have her properly introduced into our set. I daresay she’s already feathering her nest ?”

“ Not a bit of it—at least not as you suppose. I haven’t a chance,” returned Guildford, sulkily.

"And why not? You know she had been engaged to you."

"Yes! Well, it's all off: that great don, O'Driscoll, whom I met there just now, is, I can see quite well, a favoured suitor."

Lady Alicia's brow darkened, her eye and lip set, and her whole aspect and bearing underwent an immediate change. Guildford, exulting with demure visage at the perceptible effect of his statement, tranquilly made answer, as sneeringly she taunted him: "And you are meek enough, and abject enough to suffer a rival to brush you like a fly from his path! Pshaw!—I had thought you were a man!"

"What would you have me do?" sighed Colandisk, softly.

"What I would do in your place, call him out and shoot him."

"No; you would not like that, though you say it. Don't we all know—I'll not say what?"

"You may say it!" she cried, fiercely. "I know I've made a fool of myself; I have been honest enough to manifest a partiality for him that might encourage him to hope, and preserve my path intact from rivals: yet, so much am I the slave of jealous passion, I would rather see him shot than married to Alphonse Fitzpatrick, who does not in the least care for him, but who loves you devotedly, as she confessed to myself, only scruples have been put into her head, and she's such a simpleton that she is afraid to displease her friends by avowing and asserting her own pleasure and will."

"If I thought that!" murmured Colandisk, quickened by a new light, and he jerked his head emphatically.

"Well, what would you do?" demanded Lady Alicia. "I'll tell you what you'll do, Colandisk: you are no coward"—Guildford plumed up like a cock going to crow—"you don't want for wit and energy; why not boldly seize and carry her off? She is your undoubted property, and when once you are fast married her friends must, perforce, be reconciled to it, and your spirit will be applauded by everyone. It is quite easy: the thing is done every day;

and if you want money to help you I'm sure I won't grudge a loan."

"By George and the dragon! you are an angel of light, Alicia! I never thought of that!" exclaimed Colandisk, swallowing a glass of wine. "The very thing! I'll do it, once I see my way; that's the only difficulty—how to set about it, for it's a business we must not bungle in."

"And *apropos*, here comes one who will aid you in its execution," cried Lady Alicia, as Lord Carhampton entered.

"Well, what's ado?" said his lordship, putting down his gloves. "Congratulate you, old boy;—got rid of the incumbrance?—open to new engagement? Ha—ha—ha!"

"Yes, and you must help him, uncle," laughed Lady Alicia, now in exuberant spirits, clapping her hands gleefully.

"Not I, indeed! I'm not a philanthropist, I never go in for helping anyone."

"Fudge, uncle, you must!—you wanted me to help you yesterday."

"Well, you didn't: that's all I know."

"Don't recriminate, sir;—to-day I will come to terms."

"Explain yourself."

"You know, so spare preamble, I am attached to O'Driscoll?"

"You never made a secret of it, and I do not think he admires your cheek, else he wouldn't have been so slow to snap at the bait. Go on!"

"That's not the reason how you must badly construe things. He'd have proposed long since but for that sly thing, Alphonse Fitzpatrick."

"I'm much indebted to her. I don't ambition the impoverished O'Driscoll connexion—bar sinister, and all that—in our family. The Irish girl is much more suited to him. Why doesn't he marry her?"

"He doesn't care a pin for her, only she's such a flirt and coquette, and it amuses you men to have women dangling about you, making show of love, and all that."

"Well, what do you want me to do? If any job, mind, cash down's the word."

"Very well! I'll lend you the £5,000 you asked for on condition that you help Guildford to carry off Alphonse and marry her. When she's out of the way I'll have Maurice all to myself."

"Phew!" whistled Carhampton. "Is that the go? Agreed!—count on my service. Let me see!" His lordship screwed his eyes into a parenthesis of crows'-feet, as though the rays of vision, concentrated into a focus, more clearly aided his mental perception. "Bad news in to-day: more skirmishes with the troops, insurgents growing presumptuous, Kingsborough going down in person to command the forces in Wexford. I'll enlist him in our business: only question, how to lay hold on the coy nymph; what *ruse* shall we plan to inveigle her, without creating a disturbance?"

"Yes, that is the point," cried Lady Alicia, briskly; "for, mind you, our names must not transpire as being mixed up in the business on any account."

"I'll take care of that," said his lordship, "since my last confounded escapade got bruited about that girl, Mary Kelly, I must be cautious, or my character will be irretrievably lost. Now, I have a plan: we'll contrive a message from Priest Fitzpatrick, requiring to see his sister upon some important matter this evening. Mother Llewellyn will be the bearer of the mandate. Guildford and I, meanwhile, will lie in wait, disguised as bailiffs, in some convenient corner, and soon as the lady comes within reach, present a document empowering us to arrest her, as implicated with and privy to the designs of the United Irishmen, hand her into a chaise, drive down to the quay, put her on board Lord Kingsborough's vessel, and then, my dear fellow, all the residue of the work is yours. I've made clear the way before you."

"Thanks, thanks; an admirable plan!" cried Colandisk, in hilarious excitement. "You're a trump, Luttrell, and no mistake! I am for ever indebted to you."

"Hold!—softly, my dear boy, I never permit anyone to be long in my debt on any score, and though always ready to help my friends in any little *jeu d'esprit*, intrigue, or other quandary, being a man of candour, it

behoves me to say I expect and require wages for my service. You see I honour you with implicit trust and confidence, feeling that you are in every sense a gentleman, and one of our set. Well, then, truce with preface, and to the point. Out of the ample dower your bride will bring I shall demand, upon the day of the happy nuptials effected through my instrumentality, the small bagatelle of ten thousand pounds."

"Done, you veritable Croesus!" laughed Guildford. "I'll be off now; for every moment will seem an age to me till I meet you again in masquerade. Appoint the rendezvous."

"Wait a moment, and I'll be with you. Here, Alicia, fork out a check for five thousand, payable out of the ten."

"It is said they are two bad pays, uncle—those who pay beforehand and those who don't pay at all. I shall not pay till the work is done."

"Just like you, women, suspicious and mean! No wonder we scorn and despise the sex," muttered Lord Carhampton, scowling upon the derisively smiling lady, as he departed with Guildford Colandisk, and thinking to himself the while: "When I get it, 'twill be a long loan, my fair niece, since I shall take my own time for repayment."

It was evening, and the lamps shone, and the tea-urn bubbled upon the table, laid with costly rare china, and presided over by the Misses Warbeck Higgenboggan, who had convened a divan of their friends for the ostensible purpose of debating a subject of charity, upon which, through some erratic phenomena of the human mind, whose subtleties can never be defined by phrases, they had suddenly conceived an interest: the amelioration of the condition of the poor ignorant Irish in the city and about the suburbs. Head of the committee was the Rev. Nathaniel Lamb, who having shown himself to his new parishioners, and being duly accredited by them, and his curate, who, having at present not much to do in the lawless district, spent most of their time in Dublin; and Lady Alicia, who in her great zeal for promoting good, waived strong antipathy to the elderly spinsters and their social

circle; and Miss Gubbins, her aide-de camp, pledged to back her up in every opinion that contradicted theirs; and the Misses Hodgens, and the Misses Pomfret, proud to be associated in any cause patronised by a titled lady and advocated by the delightful rector and his talented young curate, who, had polygamy been countenanced, might easily have filled a spacious seraglio with his fair admirers, against whose witching blandishments it taxed him sorely to hold the even tenor of his way, unbalanced by intoxicating doses of adulation, uncapsized by giddy vanity; but cast in mould of proof, there he sat between Jemima Hodgens and Lady Alicia, his coffee and muffin untasted before him, while, with eyes devoutly fixed upon the ceiling, he listened to Miss Higgenboggan saying, as she sipped her tea,

"For my part, I don't see where we are to begin at the work or how to set about it; the wealth of the Indies wouldn't suffice all the squalid, lazy, idle creatures that infest our streets, yet something must be done to abate the nuisance that meets us at every turn."

"Very true, my dear madam," said the curate, his mouth full of buttered toast; "I don't see what can be done, except to make them work."

"But that's just what they won't do," cried Miss Fanny, cutting a slice of plumcake; "so long as they can get by begging they won't work, upon which principle I never give to a beggar."

"Allow me to contradict you," said Lady Alicia, dictatorially; "the people are willing enough to work if they get employment, but they are horribly ungrateful. I know an English lady, a friend of mine, who was shocked when she came over here to see barefooted girls and women standing or sitting all day long with dishevelled hair, and in ragged clothes not enough to cover them, at the door of their mud hovels. She and her husband, being good, charitable Christians, set to work to reform them; got them taught to make straw hats, at which they earned a penny a day, and to knit stockings and work embroidery, till, what with that and a Sunday school, in twelve months you would not have known it to be the same place or the

same people, so much was their condition improved; yet for all that, not one of the wretches was grateful enough to go to church for them, and when they put out some bad characters for their stubbornness, they were served with Rockite notices, and had to fly; so I say begin with making them go to church."

"My dear lady Alicia, we have tried that till we are sick of it," sighed the Rev. Nathaniel, turning from contemplating the ceiling to the subject of debate. "There's no truth, honesty, or sincerity among the Irish; not even among the *soi-disant* Irish gentlemen is the precious jewel to be found. We have exhausted a treasury in pensioning knaves, who hypocritically received our instructions—swallowed, as it were, the manna of the Word, promised to attend church, clutched the bribe, and levanted with their tongue out, rejoicing in their craft."

"If I could adjudicate or presume to give my opinion on the question," said Miss Hodgins, "I'd transport all the old people to Botany Bay, and seize upon all the children, whom I would put into a good training school, and so eradicate from them every taint of Popery. They would become shining lights of salvation—that sort I have noticed always do."

"It's the wisest thing has been said to-night," exclaimed Miss Higginboggan; "and so much cheaper and more feasible a plan."

"I beg your pardon," interposed Miss Gubbins; "children are most expensive, and not at all to be depended on; as I was lately reading in a learned lecture, by the Rev. Jedediah Fathomit, that the instincts and propensities of progenitors are engrafted on their generations; so those Popish children retain indelibly branded upon their natures the countersign of Rome, and——" She was cut short by the opening of the door, and the announcement of, "Mr. O'Driscoll."

Very pale and evidently disconcerted was the young man as he entered and surveyed the equally surprised company, all of whom, save Lady Alicia, bent upon him wondering eyes; but in hers, conscious on the instant of the purport of his unexpected visit to the Misses Higgen-

boggan, there was a wild gleam of triumph and joy, as furtively she smiled a sinister smile, and intently probed his countenance; while he, bowing to the circle, apologised to Miss Sophy, who had risen in formal courtesy, and in voice somewhat nervous, though strong and deep, asked if she could, on the part of her uncle and brother, who waited below, not wishing to intrude, give him any information concerning their niece, Miss Fitzpatrick, who had left home on the afternoon of the day before, to go to her brother, and had not since been heard of.

"Just what I always foresaw," solemnly enunciated Miss Higgenboggan, frowning with virtuous severity, and shaking her head. "I always had a presentiment that the wild creature would commit herself by some act of giddiness, if not worse. We were fortunate to have had a timely riddance of such a responsibility. Had it happened while she was under my care I should have been quite upset."

"Had what happened, madam?" interrogated O'Driscoll, taking Miss Sophy aback by the blunt query and his stern aspect and manner.

"Why, why," she stammered, quite nonplussed, "what you have just told me."

"I have told you nothing, madam," he returned, stiffly; "I merely asked could you give me any information concerning Miss Fitzpatrick, your niece, and instead you launch out into animadversion and insinuations against a young girl, concerning whom her friends are suffering excruciating misery; but since you are not able or willing to aid us in quest of her, I wish you good-evening."

"Gracious! how fiery you are, Maurice!" smiled Lady Alicia, satirically; "one would think you were in chase of a runaway wife. Miss Higgenboggan"—she glanced for the first time complacently at the lady—"is right. You never would believe me, or anyone that told you, one so innocent and prudish as Alphonse was a perfection of levity and deceit. Now, I am sufficiently deep in the cabinet to tell you that yesterday Alphonse, your paragon, eloped with Guildford Colandisk. Nay, don't look so like a hurricane: you know she had been engaged to him before that artful counterfeit, Caroline Damer, otherwise

Dobbs, came between them, when Jerry Higgenboggan left away all the money ; but Don Antonio has made all square again between them, so that excuses her in some sort. Can't you sit down ? I'll want you to see me home. I've a great deal to say to you, and I'm sure Miss Higgenboggan will be glad if your friends will come up and join our tea."

"Excuse me, Lady Alicia, I must go," said Maurice, coldly declining Miss Higgenboggan's reiterated invitation. "And this much hear me say in vindication of your niece, madam : I also am sufficiently acquainted with the young lady to insist upon my conviction that she has been made the victim of foul play ; and in lieu of her going of her own free will with Guildford Colandisk, that she has been abducted by him, it behooves her friends to take instant measures to pursue him ;—and I thank you, Lady Alicia, for having so kindly afforded even this clue to our search."

He was off before Lady Alicia, biting her lips with vexation at her own egregious blunder, could retrieve her error, and during the remainder of the evening she sat mostly absorbed in gloomy thought, fabricating new plots and wiles to circumvent others and ensure her own success, while O'Driscoll, with Don Antonio, and Father Fitzpatrick were on their way to Major Sirr's, to engage his service in their behalf, and the company resumed with animation the interrupted theme of how to ameliorate the condition of the poor ignorant Irish, and to devise new expedients for enticing them to the glories of Sion, training their optics to Gospel light, and alluring them to relish the manna of the Word : some proposing, as a means to the desired end, flannel petticoats and soup ; others recommending meal and hairy bacon, as a lure not to be resisted by hungry stomachs ; while not a few observed, "that experience having proved the Irish to be fastidious of appetite, and of rather epicurean taste, they would suggest, bread and butter and tea, as bait more infallible, but all agreeing, that could the lot be submerged for one hour in the briny deep, the expedient were the most satisfactory of all."

CHAPTER XXXVI.

ALPHONSE FITZPATRICK RESCUED—LORD KINGSBOROUGH
IN TROUBLE—CUPID AT HIS TRICKS.

“Sacred to thy soul will be
The land of him who could forget
All but that bleeding land for thee.
When other eyes shall see unmoved
Her widows mourn, her warriors fall,
Thou’lt think how well one Gheber lov’d,
And for his sake thou’lt weep for all!”
“FIRE WORSHIPPERS.”

THE feelings of Alphonse Fitzpatrick may be more easily imagined than described, when, decoyed by specious message conveyed to her on the part of her brother by a female unknown to her, who purported to be a confidential member of his flock, and hastening to his residence, she was intercepted and compelled, under feigned warrant of arrest, to submit to be conducted by her captors to undergo investigation before some magistrate of whose name and abode she was in utter ignorance. At first, extreme terror taking possession of her mind, to the exclusion of every other sense, she had wept and entreated at least the favour of being first taken to her uncle or brother to acquaint them with her situation; but this request being inexorably refused, she sat like one petrified into stone, so completely was every faculty paralysed by the crushing blow that had befallen her; for well she knew that in those terrible days no innocence could guarantee safety or justice, and sex or condition could claim no privilege of exemption from vengeance, should but the breath of suspicion, even though emanating from lips of calumny, blow upon one’s fame. So in profoundest dejection, pale and desponding as one over whom the sentence of doom had been already spoken,

she beheld herself hurried along towards the quay; then, as the chaise drew up beside the wharf, and she was ordered to alight and led on board the vessel, just then setting sail, came the poignant thought, not of her own fate, but the affliction into which her sudden and mysterious disappearance would plunge her uncle and brother, with perplexing conjectures as to the inimical party whose motives, or ill-will, or interest could have directed against her any criminating accusation, for which over and over she ransacked her brain to come at the smallest foundation. By-and-by, however, when they quitted shore and launched into the deep, Guildford Colandisk, rejoicing in the success of his enterprise, and feeling how completely she was in his hands, boldly cast off disguise, and, abetted by Lord Kingsborough's patronage, revealed himself in *propria persona*, at once defiant and triumphant, before her astonished eyes. Flashing the whole truth of the transaction upon her mind, she was herself again—firm, courageous, and resolute. Scornfully smiling away the tears that had besprent her visage as, exulting, Guildford, casting himself at her feet with mocking penitence, besought her forgiveness for the little trick his own passionate love and her wayward humour had incited him to act, adding significantly that, being now in his power, she had no option to choose, so need not be influenced by ulterior considerations as to the pleasure of her friends in the matter; and Lord Kingsborough hinted, with much suavity, "that it would be more pleasing to all parties she would with good grace to surrender to unavoidable circumstances, put away prudery, and yield amicably a consent which should otherwise be extorted forcibly to make his friend happy, she proudly drew up her graceful head, walked deliberately to the table of the state saloon, which was laid for dinner, took therefrom a sharp, glittering steel knife, advanced a few paces, and, speaking clear and composed, said:

"You have, indeed, acted a base trick, Mr. Colandisk, but which, withal, will not avail your design. It is not I who am in your power, but you that are in mine. Show me"—she turned to a woman of repulsive mien who

stood by, with an expression in her eyes that the serpent might have shown in his baleful gaze when fixed with guileful intent on Eve—"to some retired berth, and let any who approaches within the reach of my arm beware the consequences, for by this sacred symbol on my bosom"—she held up a small ivory crucifix—"I pledge myself that his heart's blood or mine shall flow." Retreating backward as she spoke, fixedly surveying each one of the motionless group, she entered a small recess partitioned from off the state cabin, closed and bolted the door, and turned to look out of a small window upon the waves rippling beneath the fast keel, gliding like a ploughshare on its course, while Lord Kingsborough addressed the rather discomfited Guildford:

"By Jove, there's a vixen! Why, man, she'll box your ears! How, in the name of Pluto, could you fancy such a termagant, *houri* though she be? I wouldn't risk having a decanter flung at my head or being stuck like a pig!"

"The money!" muttered candid Guildford, disconsolately. "A drowning man will grasp at a straw, and I didn't know she was so violent."

"Alack, sir, don't be downhearted," said Mother Llewellyn, encouragingly, with a calculating eye to her own profit in his success. "These young girls at first sight are all brag and bluster, but as much to be minded as kittens putting up their backs and spitting. Let her be awhile, and she'll tame down of her own accord. Just don't seem to notice her fits."

"Just so, Colandisk," said Lord Kingsborough; "leave her to herself while on board, and when we have her safely moored in the 'Cape of Good Hope,' you can, at your leisure, bind her to the yoke; and when you have her in harness be advised by me, don't spare whip or bridle to make her run smooth, for she'll need it."

"Be hanged if I do! I'll show her from the start I won't be a henpecked husband," said Guildford, crossly. "Contrary baggage!—I almost feel to hate her; but I musn't lose the balloons!"

* * * * *

Early on the morning succeeding the capture of Wexford, the insurgent leaders had issued orders to their men to march out and encamp on Windmill Hill, leaving but a force sufficient to garrison the town. Unfortunately, the rebels had so frequently in every conflict put to flight and routed the military and yeomen, they had now begun to hold them in a contempt which degenerated into rashness and an overweening confidence in their own strength. Hence, while in a day or two the forces, in separate divisions—the first under their leader, Bagnal Harvey, the second under Fathers Murphy, Roche, Kearns, and others—marched, one for Taghmon, and the other to open a pass between Wexford and Wicklow, the town, after a series of skirmishes with the royalist troops, was surprised and retaken, the insurgents being driven outside the walls and forced to march with speed to join the camp at Carrigrue. Renewed and decisive success, however, against Colonel Walpole and General Loftus, Lord Mountjoy and the forces at Carrigrue, Tubberneering, Gorey, and other minor places, indemnified their loss by making them masters of the entire county, with the exception of Newtownbarry, New Ross, and Duncannon Fort: they had also possession of the Wicklow district between Arklow and Wexford; and “it was now that the Irish Government became seriously alarmed;” * “they had kindled a war in the heart of the country, and it was doubtful whether they possessed the power of extinguishing it.” † Mr. Fox, ever sensitively alive to the honour of his country and the feelings of humanity, appealed to the British Senate, and implored the minister to halt in his desperate career. “I hold,” he said, “documents incontrovertible, which show that this sanguinary contest has already cost his majesty’s forces the loss of ten thousand men.” The appeal was ineffectual, and the insurrection raged on.

The first division, meanwhile, of the insurgent army, under command of Bagnal Harvey, General-in-Chief, set out from their encampment at Taghmon to attack the town of Ross. All Wexford was now the theatre of war on a

* Teeling.

† Kavanagh’s “History of the Insurrection.”

mighty scale, ninety thousand royalist troops within the limit of this one county, well drilled and supplied with ample resources, contested the field against thirty thousand insurgents, untrained to battle, and destitute of all military equipment. Save among two or three thousand, the pike, hatchet, scythe, club, and pitchfork being still the universal weapons, which were only of avail in close hand-to-hand conflict, the struggle was for victory or death; for the Orange yeomanry, with their mercenary aids, giving no quarter to the people, were met with equal retaliation; and the scenes of atrocity which they had inaugurated and ruthlessly perpetrated in the country had, at long last, produced the effect of working up their spirit to a vindictive ferocity, reckless of result, deaf to mercy, and intent only upon the destruction of the foe at the willing sacrifice of their own life.

Miles and Hugh O'Byrne, having taken leave of Captain Courtney, his wife, and daughter, before leaving Wexford town to join their corps under Bagnal Harvey, next sought Florence Esmonde and Percy, to make their adieu. Percy, with some return of his former freezing *hauteur*, which had somewhat abated in the social reunion of the preceding evening, responded to the farewell, admonishing them the while not to be too buoyed up by the auspices of the present, nor so foolhardy as to suppose that the Lion of Britain would not yet snatch back the wounded prey, whose frantic efforts had but procured a momentary emancipation from its grasp; and Hugh commenting indignantly upon the effects of bigotry and prejudice, which could so pervert man's noble mind as to render him a cruel parricide to his country instead of a glorious champion—its disgrace instead of its pride. But between Miles and Florence the parting was more gentle; very cold was her hand, very pale her cheek, very sad and sympathetic her eye as it frankly met his, and very earnest was the tone of her subdued voice as she murmured:

"I shall weary heaven with prayers for your safe return, and my heart is with you and your cause. Very bitter has been the goad that has impelled you and yours to a course so desperate and riskful."

"Truly you speak, lady," returned Miles, in a tone of feeling. "No light or trivial cause or quarrel this that drew me reluctant from a more genial sphere of peaceful seclusion to the scene of strife and arms; yet, since it is so, very precious to my heart are those kind words of sympathy from your lips. Like a benediction they will infuse new zeal into my efforts; for surely heaven will hear, when invoked by soul so pure. Emboldened by your goodness, fain would I now crave, as the relic of a saint, some memento of you and of this hour, that in war's wild hurricane, when my hand is lifted against our foes, I may still remember that yours in friendship has clasped mine; and if returned victorious from every danger, it might yet be a talisman between us of sympathetic confidence and interest."

"What shall the amulet be?" smiled Flora, blushing brightly, and glancing at a pearl ring on her finger.

"Yes, let it be this," said Miles. "A ring is a good omen. What may I give you in exchange worthy your acceptance?" He looked puzzled.

"This," said Florence, half-bold, half-shy, touching a little golden crucifix that hung suspended by a slender chain round his neck, and which had escaped, in his hurried morning toilet, from his bosom. Miles coloured and hesitated; it was his mother's hand that had, on the day of his first communion, placed it there, with the injunction, and claiming his promise, never to part with or lay it aside;—he valued it as a most precious thing.

"No, Florence, I cannot part with this without being untrue to her who gave it. It is a mother's gift," he quickly added, observing a shade of disappointment upon her brow; "but you shall have—that is, if you indeed" (he smiled) "care for such a Popish symbol—a *fac-simile* one by courier from my next encampment."

"Oh, that is better!" she exclaimed, throwing off, in the excitement of the moment, all reserve; "for then I will hear some tidings of you. You are very good; and I would value a crucifix more than anything. What you prize I can see no reason to condemn, even though I admit I have been taught to regard such

article as an emblem of superstition ; yet who knows, who knows ?" she added, with a sigh. "It may not follow that we alone are all right and others all wrong. I wish I knew, for then——" she paused, disconcerted beneath the steadfast gaze of Miles. At the moment Percy came up, wrathful from a clash of argument with Hugh upon the question of Loyalty *versus* Patriotism, and with one more adieu they parted.

At the door they met Ned, who waited for them, himself mounted and holding their horses. The boy, now quite on easy terms with both Miles and Hugh, addressed them as they rode along :

"Sir, I hope we'll be soon pitching into them again, and if I don't work the pike may I never hold it again."

"What's up now, Ned ?" exclaimed Miles, involuntarily checking his steed, as, from the lad's ruffled face and manner, he conceived a sudden apprehension that he had obtained some ill-tidings of Euphemia and Nelly and Larry Doyle, of whom no account had been brought by Moll and Kitty—the house where they had sheltered being a burned heap of ruins, and not a single creature within reach to say had the inmates fled or perished. "Any news of the children ?"

"No, sir, not a word. Let us hope the best, that they have escaped, or some token would have come to hand ; but the little drummer, sir, Willy Mitchell."

"Well, what of him ?"

"O'Brien and O'Hart, sir, brought word last night that Hunter Gowan and a lot of the yeos had him hanged for refusing to beat the drum to 'Croppies Lie Down,' after stabbing him with a dozen bayonets."

"Poor child !" ejaculated Miles and Hugh ; "pity we did not make him our prisoner ; but who could have foreseen such a deed perpetrated against their own—and a mere child. He was a gallant little fellow ; but fear not, we'll avenge him, Ned."

"Sir, they're like locusts—the more we kill of 'em the thicker they seem to come," said Ned. "I think I must have piked myself more than twenty. I wonder do they come to life again ?"

Thus talking they joined the squadron, where they received orders from General Harvey to proceed with a band told off to the river to man the oyster boats, each with a crew of thirty-five, to cruise in the offing and board all passing ships, to get provisions, of which they stood in much need, for the town and the troops.

It was in the course of the following day that, after having captured several prizes, three of the boats returned heavily laden with provisions, passing the Fort of Rosclaire, mounted with cannon, and cautiously entering the mouth of the harbour, blocked up with sunken vessels, to obstruct any war ship, while the fourth continued to cruise to and fro, having boarded but one brig and taken but little booty. A vessel, however, crowding all sail, hove in sight, and, with ensign flying from the top-gallant mast, bore swiftly down upon them. The boat immediately tacked to meet her, all hands plying the oar with vigorous stroke, soon brought it alongside; and while the captain hailed the vessel with signals for parley, Miles rested upon his oar, and gazing forward was surprised to see a white handkerchief waved from a cabin window with impetuous motion, and then, as soon as it caught his eye, dropped below. Putting out his oar he caught it, and opened it out to examine, while the following dialogue ensued between the captains of the respective crafts, and the crews gave attentive ear.

"Why do you stop us? What news have you?" sung out the captain of the vessel, leaning over the bulwarks. "Come, be smart!"

"We want food and plenty of it—the best, mind," cried the captain of the boat; "don't keep us all day!"

"To Limbo with you! Where are you from and whither bound?" cried the other son of Neptune, looking as belligerent as a whale at a shoal of minnows, come up to bully him.

"From Wexford town and going back again when we've got what we want," replied the nautical hero, bracing up his marine garb. "Come, be lively with the prog."

"D—n your impudence; get out of our course, or we'll

run you down. We're going into Wexford ourselves," shouted the other, "where I'll have you pilloried, fined, and punished for misdemeanour."

"Arrah, you will, my hearty! Take care it's your mother's son won't be in the stocks first; but take your time; we won't be in any hurry to open the gates to ye. Are ye going to give us the food, ye unmannerly bear, or do ye want us to go up and fetch it?"

"This is most extraordinary," cried Guildford Colandisk who had had no inkling of the events that had lately transpired. "The fellow may be a madman; but, surely, the whole boatload are not lunatics. Ho! you, sir, with the white handkerchief, explain what means this conduct."

"Wexford is in the hands of the insurgents, and will open gates to none but friends," said Miles, who recognised the speaker, though he did not remember him just now. Lord Kingsborough, screened from observation in the group, hastily came forward, exclaiming:

"Don't believe the scoundrel. It's a d—d lie. Steer on, and let us get into port!"

"Board the vessel! Board her!—board her!" shouted a chorus of voices. "The pitchcapper!—seize him—seize him!—burn him!—hang him!—throw him overboard!—hoist signals for the boats to come back!" were the clamorous cries that burst on every side, as the detested nobleman, coming to the front, was speedily recognised by the infuriated crew, who, now clambering up the vessel's sides, defied all control to restrain their passions broken loose, while the object of their execration and threats, flying down into the cabin for his gun, followed as nimbly by Colandisk, prepared to defend himself as best he could from his assailants, whom the captain, now seeing the true state of affairs, hastened to mollify with hampers of victuals and kegs of rum, and anything else they fancied, begging only their permission to return to Dublin with the passengers and crew unhurt.

"Go to Jericho, if it suit ye; we don't want to be bothered with such lumber; but we must have Kingsborough—we must get the pitchcapper!" shouted a Babel of voices, as a *rush en masse* was made for the state saloon, which was

speedily thronged by a desperate-looking swarm, ravenous for blood, with but two or three exceptions.

On board the vessel with Lord Kingsborough were two or three of his friends, coming down to Wexford; among them was Marmion Esmond, to bring up his sister to Dublin. To him Miles O'Byrne addressed himself:

"Captain Esmond, lay down your gun; resistance will but expose you all to greater peril. Counsel Lord Kingsborough to disarm immediate vengeance by yielding himself peaceably a prisoner."

"I see you are a gentleman, sir. I deliver myself up to you if you but guarantee my life!" exclaimed his lordship, eagerly and wistfully appealing to Miles, who coldly replied:

"I have no authority to act here; I hold no place of command; I can but offer my advice."

"Better keep it till it's axed for, sir," shouted twenty rude voices, while angry eyes and gestures warned Miles to silence. "Between yous an' the priests too many get off bein' made pay their debts; an' only we know yous for our frinds, an' true min, it's little call ye'd have to meddle wid us. Get along, boys; haul 'im off; away wid 'im 'an his black phiz. We'll see how purty he'll look wid a pitchcap on his pole, an' a few skivers of cold iron in his body. Away wid 'im!"

Ill fared it then, to all appearance, with his doughty lordship, as, with two of his officers, he was led captive and hurried along by an infuriated rable, eager for vengeance, and impatient of any authority that sought to interpose to baffle it. Miles and Hugh, who had followed the route on deck, having exchanged a few words, Hugh set out to accompany the band, whispering at an opportune moment to Esmond, beside whom he walked:

"His lordship's life and that of his friends hangs upon the turn of a straw. Let not a breath add to the flame of the ignited populace till we can strive to pacify their temper; much may depend upon yourselves."

Esmond stiffly returned a haughty bow, and the *cortège* filed along with tumultuous uproar to the residence of the governor of the town *pro tempo*, Captain Keogh; while

Miles, silently gazing after them, was now accosted by Guildford Colandisk, who, pale and trembling, came from under a sofa in the saloon, where he had, on the first burst of the *émeute*, prudently ensconced himself, mother Llewellyn having sat down upon it and spread out her ample drapery the more effectually to conceal him.

"Nonsense, Byrne; is this you? I am enchanted to see you, old friend! How goes it? Unlucky wight that Kingsborough; what'll they do with him? Curse me if ever I beheld such a rabble; I thought they'd have sunk the vessel; but I suppose now they have him we are free to return to Dublin?"

"I don't know, sir, that you are. I hold this vessel for the present," curtly answered Miles, taking upon himself a tone of much authority. "Let me see," he added, electrifying Colandisk by his speech, "the lady you have on board, to whom this handkerchief belongs——"

"That's me, sir," said Mother Llewellyn, coming forward, with an engratiating smile, and dropping a courtesy.

"Woman!" sternly cried Miles, at once changing her facetious mood to quaking dread, "your life depends upon your answer! How came you by it?"

"Oh, Lord, sir, don't be so fierce," she said, in oily yet unsteady accents. "'Tis my daughter's, an', sure, what's hers is the same as mine; an' I'm not used to be spoke to so."

"Let me see her," demanded Miles, austere.

Now spoke Guildford Colandisk, perceiving the woman's quailing mien:

"Byrne, you can't see her; she's my wife, and a little unbinged in her mind. By the doctor's orders she is kept quiet, and medical treatment will do for her, poor dear!"

"Let me see her!" was Miles' sole rejoinder.

"For what purpose? Come, Byrne, don't be unreasonable; show the courtesy of one gentleman to another. You cannot wonder at my reluctance to exhibit the antics of an insane wife, whose mania runs upon her being yet a maid and another person."

"I must see her," said Miles, imperiously.

"Beware, sir, how you change a friend into an enemy by your proceeding. I may not brook affront," passionately vociferated Guildford.

"I do not seek to affront you, sir," returned Miles, deliberately; "but end this foolish chatter. I must see the lady, and know from her how she became possessed of a lawn handkerchief, one of a set I brought from France a present to my sister, and marked with her initials in a wreath of shamrocks and *fleur de lis*." He beckoned as he spoke to Ned Burke and Johnny Doyle to approach, and followed by them he prepared again to descend to the saloon.

"Oh, if that be all, I can let you see her, though I warn you beforehand 'tis little you learn from her mad raving." Guildford proceeded to the cabin door, which he had taken the precaution to lock on the outside when the vessel was first boarded, after a sharp scuffle to push back Alphonse, who had rushed out; and opening it he led her forth, saying:

"Here she is—mad as a March hare."

At first sight of the distracted face, blurred with tears, the dishevelled hair, torn robe, and the wild cry, "Save me!—save me!—I am not mad," with which she sprung forward and clutched his arm with desperate grasp, satisfied at once that Colandisk had said only the truth, and that the sister for whom his fears had been awakened was not on board, he was about to turn, with an apology, and say: "Take her back; it is all right;" but, compassionate and gentle, as he was fierce and stern, he paused a moment to speak a kind, soothing word to the distressed being who evidently besought his sympathy.

"No; no; you are not mad; no one shall harm you: don't look so frightened. Is this your handkerchief?" Alphonse, sobbing as if her heart would break, and unable to utter a syllable, merely held out her hand in token.

"There now, just tell me where did you get it, if you can remember."

"Oh, yes," she sobbed; "it was Effie O'Byrne's—your sister's; she dropped it after her the evening we were speaking together before she left Miss Hodgens' school,

and I picked it up, and threw it overboard to attract your notice."

Miles did not think this collected reply savoured much of insanity. Moreover, it was plain she knew him, and he began, now that her features had relaxed from the contortion of mental agony, to surmise that he had seen this face before. So, again speaking, he said :

"May I ask your name?"

"I am Alphonse Fitzpatrick," she faltered, with a heavy sigh.

"There now, I told you that. There's where she breaks down; let me take her now to her mother," whispered Guildford to Miles; but Miles, holding his own way, merely nodded his head, and, observing Alphonse's eager anxiety again to address him, he said :

"I know;—now I remember you quite well. You are a little altered since I last saw you; but are you not married since? Mr. Colandisk has told me you were."

She impetuously replied, darting a look at the exasperated Colandisk, that had nearly belied her cause, but for the sequel :

"No, no, I am not! He and that woman beguiled me from home under false pretences, dragged me on board this vessel, and brought me hither to make me marry him, his other wife being yet alive."

"She isn't my wife, the false jade! And didn't you promise to be my wife a hundred times; and so you shall, in spite of your prevarication," roared the incensed Guildford. "Let her go!—give her up to me!—I command you, Byrne, or take the consequences!"

"Stand off, sir!" returned Miles, "else I shall begin to question whether a straight jacket may not be applicable in your own case!"

"Don't jeer, sir. Do you refuse to obey me?" blustered the bully.

Miles laughed outright, for Alphonse had unconsciously smiled, and Ned Burke exhibited a physiognomy ludicrously scornful and indignant. "You must excuse me, sir," pleaded Miles, mockingly; "we have so many

masters among you, it is hard to choose which to obey, when they issue contrary injunctions. There is another who has engaged my service in his interest, and without displeasing him I could not accede to your demand. First and foremost my duty is to restore Miss Fitzpatrick to her friends; then you and Mr. O'Driscoll, who is devotedly attached to her, shall have your rival claims adjusted at her pleasure."

"D—n the coxcomb, I'll shoot him!" retorted Colan-diak, frowning wickedly. "I won't be done out of my right by him. What, in the meantime, are you going to do with this perfidious jilt?"

"I cannot tell you that yet, sir; but I can tell you, if you repeat such words, I will knock you down; so be careful. It is for Miss Fitzpatrick to express her desire, which, as far as possible, shall be carried out. But, ho! here comes my aides-de-camp in a hurry, and very *apropos* to the question," he continued as, all flushed and flustered, Moll Doyle and Kitty Burke, carrying pikes, which had now become as their walking-sticks, rushed in breathless to the saloon; and, wonder of wonders to Miles, followed by the whole Courtney family, including Florence Esmond with Hugh. He was so taken aback, he could only stand still and stare, while Moll yelled in notes like the scream of a goose:

"He's got off!—he's got off, bad luck to 'im! He bribed 'em all heavy to let him go, the villain! His friends stud betune him an' the pitchcap, bad cess to 'em! an' the bishop, our own bishop, worst of all, threatened us wid hell-fire if we laid a finger on 'im, the *spalpeen*!—the pitchcapper!" Taking up the refrain, Kitty, bouncing over to Alphonse Fitzpatrick, upon whom the eyes of Florence Esmond were riveted in amazement, as confidently she stood, her hand locked in that of Miles's, and exclaimed, in a genuine burst of astonishment:

"*Avourneen augus aroon machree!* is it, in troth yerself my two eyes is lookin at? *Musha, musha, alanna deelish!* how did ye get here at all?"

"Certainly the world is spinning round pretty fast, and in the topsy-turvey strange events are coming to pass."

said Hugh, approaching with more staid gait. "It is quite unexpected to meet you here, fair lady."

"She will explain it, Hugh," said Miles, interpreting the regretful expression of Flora Esmond's brow and eye, as it reverted from Alphonse to him. He held out his hand to her, but she did not take it, while he turned to learn from Captain Courtney, now in full declamation, the purport of this visit.

"A desperate country, sir!" fumed the captain, catching his eye. "I've been in Jamaica among the blacks, among the Hottentots, among earthquakes and hurricanes, and savages all over the world, and never saw anything like the scene we've just escaped from with our lives. Where's the captain of the ship? Please, sir, order him to crowd all sail at once and make for Dublin."

"Why, Captain Courtney, what has happened to mar your confidence in us since we left you well and peaceable yesterday morning?" demanded Miles, with some uneasiness. "We left men, in whom we reposed trust, to guarantee you from being molested in any way."

"No use, sir, no use; these fellows don't respect their leaders a jackstraw when their gall is up; you have no power to control them. Thousands burst like an avalanche upon us when Kingsborough was conveyed prisoner by them to our hotel. We thought we should have seen the unfortunate nobleman pitchcapped and piked before our eyes. It was as much as his friends, aided by some priests and a few of the insurgent chiefs, could do to get him a respite. O, Lord! O, Lord! we'll be all massacred, that will be the end, if we don't get on. I say, captain—captain!"

"Hush, dear, Mr. O'Byrne is speaking to you," expostulated Mrs. Courtney.

"Well, well, sir; well, what is it?" cried the captain, swinging himself impetuously round.

"There is positively no need for your alarm, nor danger to you," said Miles, firmly. "In their wildest excesses our people are actuated by a sense of justice, and know how to discriminate between the merits of their opponents. And deem not for an instant they would visit upon you or yours the wrath they hoard for one who has rendered him-

self so obnoxious as Lord Kingsborough. Did one individual of all that raging mass offer an insult, or seek to obstruct your flight hither?"

Courtney paused, cooled down to reflection :

"No, egad! Lucky so far; they had just then other fish to fry; but don't think I fear danger for myself: I'd scorn it!"

"Well, make your mind easy; there's no danger to fear for one belonging to you. Will you not trust my honour?"

"Yes, yes; you're a fine fellow;—but don't you think we did well to fly?"

"If it pleased you, certainly; but there was no occasion. Will you let me, on the part of the captain here, offer you a glass of wine, and some refreshment for the ladies, whom you have victimised to your premature caution?"

"Thanks, I will," answered Captain Courtney, now completely reassured and becalmed. "So you think it was only, after all, an *émeute*; but, bless my soul, it was appalling! and put me in mind of the revolution and the Bastille! though I must admit your Bellonas are more civil than the *poissards*, and I have to thank them for aiding us in our flight; so send them up here. Well, to make friends every where, all the Protestants in the town are running after the priests, asking to be received into the Church, and be labelled Papists, while the insurgents are lighting their pipes with bank notes, cock sure that Ireland is their own and Britain drummed out of the field. Send those women to me."

Miles complied, and, having despatched Moll and Kitty to receive some token of Captain Courtney's satisfaction, he went up to Flora Esmond, who sat apart in dejected silence, while Hugh and Alphonse conversed in a corner, and Mrs. Courtney and Ethel had got Colandisk between them, and the captain bustled about, giving directions to the steward for dinner, and Ned and Johnny prowled the ship, making themselves acquainted with nautical craft:

"I have not forgotten my promised souvenir," he smiled; "but I have not yet had an opportunity of obtaining the exact one. Meantime yours rests safely here," he drew

forth the ring attached to the chain of the crucifix ; but her face gave back no smile responsive to his, as coldly she made answer :

"Pray, do not put yourself to any trouble about it; perhaps it is better not mind it."

Miles gazed at her steadily ; feeling her cheek become crimson, she rose to withdraw.

"Nay, one moment," he whispered, taking her hand ; "have I inadvertently offended you? Nothing would more sorely grieve me. Pray, speak in candour, and let me own my fault and solicit pardon."

"Oh, no ; you have not, indeed," she gently returned. "We are all indebted to you."

"Stay yet a moment," he added, hastily ; "will you cancel the obligation by suffering me to become indebted to you? I cannot now enter into long details ; but will you grant my suit, and take a young friend of mine, Miss Fitzpatrick, in your kind charge, wherever you stay, till she can be restored to her friends, to whom I shall write forthwith, asking you also to forward the letter, that it may more safely reach them?"

"I shall do so ; any wish of yours must be a command with me."

"Thanks ; and one word more in confidence between us. It would add to the weight of my obligation could you, as women alone know how, interest her in favour of, I believe, our mutual friend, Maurice O'Driscoll, who has long admired her, and who is far more worthy of her than yonder hair-brained Guildford Colandisk, from whose grasp she has just been providentially rescued."

The whole demeanour of Florence changed. With cleared brow and sunny eye beaming upon Miles, she cried :

"Surely, I will ; Ethel and I will treat her as a sister ; but I thought," she stammered, "you—you—perhaps——"

"Engaged to her," said Miles, helping out the difficult sentence. "She is very sweet and pretty, yet not for me. Indeed, I do not suppose I shall ever marry. Hugh says I shall be an old bachelor, and it must be so, since the only object I could love fondly, deeply, is far, far beyond

my reach. No, I must not think of her, save as a kind, well-wishing friend. She can be nothing more to me—never, never!”

Florence’s brow was again thoughtful: “Do I know her?—could I in any way assist you?” she murmured, embarrassed at her own question and yearning to extract his secret.

“You do know her,” he said, “but I dare not ask you to become my advocate with her.”

“Why not?” And then her cheek faded. Yes, he meant Ethel surely, suggested ready thought, which his response as soon dissipated.

“You will, I fear, deem me presumptuous; nevertheless, I shall not deceive myself or you. The name of the peerless one I love with true knightly devotion and faith is of race and creed inimical to mine. My bold avowal may banish me forever from her sight, yet be it spoken. Her name is Florence Esmond.” He hastened away as he said the word, leaving Flora with cheeks glowing with confusion and heart swelling with happiness, gazing mute and intently after his receding figure, as he approached Alphonse, took her hand, and with light apology conducted her back, saying: “Miss Esmond has kindly promised me you shall be to her as a sister till an opportunity be afforded of restoring you to your friends.”

“Certainly I will,” said Florence, extending a gracious hand with courteous smile to the now bright and tranquil Alphonse. “I am very glad we have met; I had often wished both my cousin Ethel and I to know you, but your aunts appeared to discourage any advance of ours, I don’t know why.”

“Am I excluded from the coterie?” whispered Miles, aside to Florence, and sparing Alphonse the embarrassment of reply.

Florence laughed. Miles grew bolder. “Are you offended with me?”

“Dinner!” shouted the stentorian voice of Captain Gregg from the head of the table, now groaning under piles of costly plate and smoking viands. .

“Don’t keep us all day furnishing with your love-making

or whatever else you are coshering about down there," echoed the bass of Captain Courtney, restored to perfect equanimity by the consciousness of his safety, and the presence of good cheer, for he was not a little of a gourmand. "I say, Miles, will you come along up with us to Dublin. Ask him, Florry; you seem to have got to the soft side of him."

"I don't suppose Dublin holds a fortress that would secure my safety from a rebel's doom, should I yield to your solicitation," smiled the young man, gravely; "but I will make a note of your invitation, and do myself the pleasure when armistice or victory leaves me *carte blanche*."

"That's a good way off," said Guildford Colandisk, seating himself beside Ethel Courtney, who made gay response:

"Don't be too sure. I expect, before long, we shall see the viceroy come out, cap in hand, to salute the insurgent chief, and solicit permission to retire under favour with his goods and chattels."

"Faith, if you keep going ahead this way," chimed in her father, "it may be no joke."

"And Priest Murphy," cried Colandisk, "will come with a whip in his hand, and a monkish swarm at his back, lashing you all into the confessional, and putting every Protestant soul of you on the gridiron."

"Dear me, I shouldn't like that!" sighed Mrs. Courtney "What makes priests so cruel, Mr. O'Byrne?"—she looked pathetically at Hugh. "What a wicked man the Pope must be! Now, wouldn't you be better off, like us, without such a tyrant over you?"

"Why, ma'am," returned Hugh, solemnly, cutting a potato, "the Pope that you're so much afraid of is but a spoony tyrant; he never invented a pitchcap in his life, or sent an army into any country I know of, to massacre the people for tithes or any other cause."

"But hasn't he got the keys of heaven and hell, and can send every one that doesn't worship him to blazes?" cried Guildford, with a sour look at Alphonse. "Ah, he's a nice chap."

"All I say is," said Captain Courtney, drinking, "here's perdition to Rome, and all Papists and rebels."

"All Papists and rebels!" smiled Hugh.

"With few exceptions I mean, of course," returned Captain Courtney; "present company are always excepted."

"Do you endorse these sentiments?" whispered Miles to Florence, who sat beside him; "do you think we are such ogres?"

"No, indeed, I do not," she answered, aloud, and enthusiastically continued: "I do not believe all the stories I hear, or that Catholics, though they may be more superstitious, or less enlightened, are worse by nature than any other people; and aware as I have been made of the many cruelties perpetrated upon them to drive them into rebellion, I am not one whit sorry for their success. They have used their victories, as we must all admit, with great humanity, and I, for one, shall be ever sorry for any reverse that may befall them."

"Bravo!" exclaimed Miles; "spoken like a heroine;" while every eye gazed astonished upon the intrepid defender of the Papist cause, and Colandisk sardonically said:

"Oh, indeed! on the eve of conversion? I shall be seeing you and Miles going arm-in-arm some fine day to priestly shrift, while joybells are ringing for some Mac or O, re-instated upon the throne of his ancestors."

"Stranger things have come to pass," said Miles, coolly, helping himself to green peas; while Florence violently blushed, and convulsions of laughter shook the table.

"Do you know you're a diverting fellow; and I'm very glad you're here to amuse us, though sorry it should have been at Miss Fitzpatrick's expense," said Hugh. "How do you mean to return to Dublin after such a freak? I think you should just now be in more salutary awe of the angry Don Antonio than a hundred Popes."

At that moment Ned Burke entered in haste, with a message from Sergeant Mooney, who came on board to inform him his division and Hugh's were ordered to march instantan to join the commander, Bagnal Harvey, on his way to New Ross. The brothers promptly rose at the summons.

"Dang it, man, stay where you are! Let the rag and tag go on their way, and take a commission in the British service," cried Captain Courtney. "More respectable, and pays better."

Miles, amused at the exhortation, shook his head in deprecation.

"Not he; he's going in for a kingdom," sneered Guildford, yet with a flash of joy in his eager eye as he glanced at Alphonse, who had also risen.

"Or perchance a grave," said Miles. His eye lighted on Florence, now also standing, while the others were in commotion, and looking at him with earnest sadness. "Farewell once again, sweet lady," he said, in low tone. "Should such fate be mine, you at least, I fondly deem, will not harshly censure the cause for which I die, nor deny a word of vindication to my memory."

"Oh, do not speak so!" she returned in the same breath, her eyes dim with tears. "I shall pray for your return, and—and—I will not suffer a thought of any other sequel. Adieu!—remember your promised token."

"I will, I will, dear Florence. But hark! what sounds are those from shore? What tumultuous roar, with firing of guns and din of arms, is heard from the adjacent city?"

Miles, Hugh, Ned Burke, Johnny Doyle, Kitty, and Moll Doyle, who had been feasting in the steward's cabin, rushed on deck, followed by the terrified ladies, and Captain Courtney swearing and asking of everyone: "What has happened? are the wolves tearing Kingsborough limb from limb?" No; it was a powerful army of the king's troops, suddenly descried marching upon Wexford, to recapture the important town, and the stalwart defenders, too contemptuous of an enemy they had hitherto vanquished with so much facility, again arraying themselves in semi-military line, bristling with the formidable pike, heretofore their compendium of every weapon, and preparing to hurl their squadron upon the foe.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

THE ATTACK ON NEW ROSS.

"Now onward, and in open view,
The countless ranks of England drew;
Dark rolling like the ocean tide
When the rough West hath chafed his pride,
And his deep roar sends challenge wide
To all that bars his way."

LORD OF THE ISLES.

Too confiding in their own prowess, and neglecting, at the outset, the ordinary precautions of defence to secure the prize they had won, Wexford, as we have said, after a series of sharp conflicts with 500 royalist troops, under Colonel L'Estrange, and several corps of yeomanry, was retaken, and the insurgents, repulsed and driven outside the walls, hastened, in small detachments, some to join the camps on Vinegar Hill and Carrigrue, while others proceeded on to join the marching divisions; that commanded by General Harvey being now far advanced on its way to New Ross, which town it was unanimously decided by all the insurgent leaders, should be assaulted forthwith. Amid all this scene of marching and counter-marching, battles and skirmishes, rout and rally, where Mars was undoubted master of the revels, Cupid, as we have seen, not idle, had contrived moments to interlude the acts with business of his own, and, despite every outward circumstance arrayed against him, draw together from the chaos, hearts that had, at the outset, owned their horoscope cast under adverse planets; hence, unattracted by a single influence to each other's sphere, it would seem as if, for this very reason, the self-willed little god took pleasure all the greater in working out his intricate game, and,

certain it is, his usual success prevailed ; for, while Florence Esmond, on bended knees in her chamber, is, with clasped hands and tearful eyes, offering up fervent orisons for the safe return of the idol, now shrined in her bosom's core, and imagining fair scenes of future Elysian by him presided over, in the full beatitude of love, and pride, and joy, Miles himself, accompanied by the vision of the only object to whom his heart had ever bowed in homage, bounded, with elastic stride, along in unbroken reverie, sharing in his aspirations of glory dreams of her whose brow should be irradiated by the reflected lustre from his own, and cherishing phantasms of bliss, too celestial, too ecstatic to be realised upon earth.

The usual phalanx of women, not the common camp-followers of an army, plundering and dissolute, but honest wives and mothers of men, upon whose outskirts they hung for protection, brought up the reare, headed by Moll Doyle and Kitty Burke, and so marshalled, after three days' bivouac at Taghmon, they set out again on the 4th of June, and, on the morning of the 5th, they halted before the walls of New Ross, which was summoned to surrender, and said summons being answered by shooting the bearer of the flag of truce, orders were given for the assault.

The town of Ross, now on the verge of sanguinary contest, was at this time fortified by a garrison of 2,000 men, entrenched within strong walls and gates, protected by cannon, while the ditches on either side of the road, leading to the principal entrance on the southern side of the town, were lined with troops to guard the approach. From these and other outposts a galling fire having been opened on the insurgents, General Harvey ordered Colonel Kelly to charge with his Bantry corps, and forthwith, the assailants, raked by the impetuous charge of the gallant young leader, fled pell-mell in confusion to the very walls of the town, where they were pursued, and Colonel Cluny, being now ordered forward to support them, rushed to join the fray. The main body of the insurgents, in whose lines were marshalled Miles and Hugh O'Byrne, beholding the hot engagement, could no longer be restrained, and, despite the efforts of their leaders, poured tumultuously down

to the scene of strife. From the gates, from the walls, and from the ditches poured incessant volleys of sharp fire upon the headlong assailants, who fell in whole ranks beneath the consuming fusilade, the host still rushing on with unparalleled intrepidity, shoulder to shoulder, the cry of their leaders ever :

"Forward ! Forward !" answered with wild cheers and yells of "*Faugh a ballagh !*"—clear the way !—and still they surged around the walls, and battered the gates, and essayed the bridge, mowed down every minute beneath the chain shot that swept it.

"The devils in hell cannot resist them !" exclaimed a British officer, as the soldiers under his command began to stagger and fall back inside the walls. "Let the strong squadron of the 5th Dragoons make a sally from the town by Strongbow's-lane, and take them in the rere." The command was no sooner issued than obeyed. The dragoons, sallying forth, fell upon the insurgents' rere, for an instant disordering their lines. It was only for an instant. The women, who as yet had taken no part in the action, now, seeing the deploy of the enemy, sprung to their feet at the cry of Moll Doyle :

"Now—now for yer lives, every mother's soul o' yees, help the boys ! Fall on 'em—smash 'em—and bad cess to 'em !" And, pike in hand, bounding to the fray, with hearts scorning danger, and embittered with the memories of burned homes and slaughtered kindred, with an impetuosity that left no room for thought, they charged the astonished foe, even as their compatriots had done in Limerick a hundred years before, as reckless of scars and death as they ;—the dragoons, making a swift *detour* to defend themselves from these novel assailants, were, in turn, charged by a veering squadron of pikemen. Thus hemmed in between, as it were, two fires, the entangled enemy upon the defensive, thrown into disarray, had a stiff bout to effect a precipitate flight, with heavy loss, including that of their officer, Colonel Dodwell. Now launched into the *melée*, the Amazonian belligerents manfully held on ; and Miles, who, being in the van of battle, having no idea of what was doing in the rere, felt some not unnatural

emotions of surprise when, as they at length forced the gate of the town, and poured in like a rushing torrent that had broke its dam, General Johnson, in swift retreat before them, his eyes fell upon the stout circumference of Moll Doyle floundering in along with the tide, and soon after appeared Kitty, elbowing her way in the throng, as though such things as nerves were fabulous absurdities; for she was even laughing and exchanging badinage with the *gosssoons* as they filed along in the rush. But there was no time for comment; for though they were within the walls, and General Johnson and his troops had fled, the main guard of the hostile army, with two swivel guns, still kept possession of the market-place, while Major Vandeleur, with the Clare Militia, maintained his post at Irishtown, to each of which places Colonel Cluny proceeded to dislodge the foe. Meantime, General Johnson, having been joined by the County of Dublin Militia, eager to retrieve their laurels and avenge the death of their leader, Lord Mountjoy, inspired with new hope, returned to make a final effort to regain the town, and once again, the wearied insurgents, who had begun to disperse in quest of some sustenance, rallying, renewed the onslaught, and, despite the fearful carnage made in their ranks by the guns,* they charged, pike in hand, to the very muzzle of the musket and the mouth of the cannon, and drove the enemy in precipitate flight from the town. Again reinforced by auxiliaries, the indefatigable troops made a desperate endeavour to repair their loss, and this time victory crowned their persevering efforts. The insurgent force of three thousand, being finally overpowered by the incessant conflict, with fresh and vigorous detachments, poured in to sustain the combat, flagged and gave way, upon which General Harvey ordered a retreat to be sounded, and the dispirited insurgents marched to their former encampment of Carrigbyrne. In this engagement of thirteen hours' duration, it has been estimated by Sir Jonah Barrington and others that five thousand men fell on both sides, or were consumed in the

* Hay's History.

conflagration ; but as *suppressio veri* and *assertio falsi* were the order of the day and systematically carried out by the English commanders, the list of the killed and wounded in General Moore's despatches having been suppressed by the Government, we have no accurate statement of the havoc of this engagement.

Dispirited by their defeat, nevertheless far from despondent, Miles, after partaking of some slight refreshment, the first for twenty-eight hours, and having comforted Ned, who shed tears of bitter vexation at their disaster, and condoled with Kitty his mother, who would not be comforted, and wept loud and long, because Moll Doyle not being among the forthcoming from the battle, she had concluded must now be lying among the slain upon the field of that unfortunate town, had betaken himself to repose upon a heap of fern, a purple broom waving for curtain above his mossy pillow, and feeling uneasy also about Hugh, who was among the missing, when his attention being arrested by discordant shouts and sounds approaching from a distance, he raised himself up with several others crouched around him, to see what it might portend. They were guarded well against surprise : sentinels were posted, watch-fires burned, and every man was under arms, yet the din approached nearer and nearer.

"Up, Miles !" cried Bagnal Harvey, who bivouacked beside him, "take a party of the freshest men and go out."

Miles rose up, a horn was sounded, and at the head of a hundred volunteers he set off at a brisk march, casting a sorrowful look as he passed upon the enclosure where the wounded, whom they had borne in their retreat, were lying feverish and restless, tended and nursed by many a friendly hand. Strange how the ludicrous and the tragic often go hand-in-hand. He had not advanced beyond the turn of the road when he spied a troop of insurgents, who had loitered in the reere coming along wearily tugging in their midst a gun carriage, to which they had yoked themselves, and conspicuously mounted thereon the prominent person of Moll Doyle, making, as it were, a triumphal progress to the camp. Kitty Burke, who was seldom far apart in

the wake of Miles, whom her son invariably accompanied in every expedition, at sight of her relative, deplored as dead, at once expressed the revulsion of her feeling in characteristic fashion :

"Why, thin, niver welcome ye, woman ; what call had ye to stay behind an' we in such a way about ye ? Purshuin' to ye, Moll !"

"Musha, thin, *gra machree*," was Moll's brisk retort, "were ye such an *omadhaun* as to think that I'd coome away widout the dear little goon, that has stood our frind in so many a battle, an', plase God, will agin ? Wisha, woman, have more sinse !"

Miles, far too weary, and anxious, also, about Hugh to take much interest in a dialogue that otherwise would have greatly amused him, merely said :

"You did well," and then he turned to make inquiries among the men if they could give him any tidings of his brother ; but though many had seen him in action, they had since lost sight of him, and could give no account, upon which Ned cried :

"Sir, maybe he's wounded ? You go back wid the min, leave me to look ;—living or dead, if he's above ground, I'll find him."

Before Miles, whose duties bound him to his post in the camp, could reply, the impetuous boy was off with the buoyancy of youth, sufficiently recruited after a hard day's battle and toilsome march, by a couple of hours' rest and some food, to set out on a pilgrimage in quest of the master he dearly loved ; for in his mind Hugh and Miles were one and the same, individually entitled to his service, and though he had come to regard the latter with an admiration not entirely devoid of awe, the former, of whom he had stood in no awe whatever, was his favourite.

Meanwhile, the second division of the insurgents, encamped under Fathers John and Michael Murphy on Gorey Hill, had decided to march on Arklow, and a force of twenty thousand men, two thousand of whom carried firearms, with three thousand pikemen, the rest promiscuously armed with scythe and every available weapon, took the field. The alarm of the Government and the

metropolis was now at its height ; immediate reinforcements of the garrison of Arklow could alone secure Dublin from being next assailed by the victorious foe. The Cavan Militia was instantly despatched to the scene of action, under Lord Farnham, to support the troops under General Needham, Colonels Skerrett, Walpole, Grogan, and a cavalry regiment of the Ancient Britons. The ready foe, whose cry was ever, "Let us get at the soldiery !" soon came up with the desired enemy, posted in great force at the Fishery, and forthwith attacked their position, the gallant leaders charging with dauntless courage at their head. In vain the spirited defence of the royalists oppose the crashing onset of the pikemen, as they hurled themselves upon the adverse ranks that wavered beneath the storm. In vain the various corps of yeomen cavalry charged furiously down upon the firm ranks of the iron legions : they were broken like billows dashing upon the cliffs of the shore. Walpole's division fled panic-stricken, General Needham sounded a timely retreat from the surging onslaught. The Ancient Britons retired with severe loss ; Grogan's yeomanry broke in disorder, their captain slain, and Colonel Skerrett was driven from his position by the artillery—a few pieces of ordnance conducted by the insurgent Esmond Kyan, whose arm at the moment being unfortunately shot off by a cannon-ball, saved him from utter rout. After a contest of four hours the royalists were completely beaten out of the field. But victory to the insurgents so complete was dearly purchased by the loss of many of their matchless chiefs, among whom were Father Michael Murphy, the leading and guiding spirit of the action. Dispirited by this catastrophe, instead of pursuing the flying foe, and securing for themselves the fruits of their success in the total destruction of the troops and capture of booty, the insurgent army, bearing their wounded, marched back to Gorey ; while the rallied soldiers, the civilised English Protestants of the eighteenth century, recovering breath with their oozed-out courage, finding the coast clear of the dreaded foe, returned to wreak cowards' valour in mangling the slain with any of the defenceless wounded unhappily overlooked in the

weltering mass ; while their allies, the " Ancient Britons," held demoniac orgies round a wood fire, and left on record to all future ages their cannibal propensities, by cutting from his breast, roasting, and eating the gallant heart of Father Michael Murphy,"* of which notable exploit it was their wont to vaunt in cooler hour. " Taking care to avoid any place where the dreaded pikemen were in force, the yeomanry and military in small bands infested the country, and wherever they went the shrieks and death-cries of tortured victims still, as heretofore, announced their presence,"† and ruin befell the hearths and homes of the desolated land.

Pending the brief interval that ensued, of respite from the field, while still encamped, waiting for orders from Limbrick Hill, to which place the main body of the insurgents had advanced, Miles O'Byrne lingered in agitating suspense as to the fate of Hugh, whom Neil More, having met Ned Burke on the way, acquainted with his having been made prisoner, while of Ned Burke who, later on, had unaccountably disappeared, there was yet no tidings or trace whatever.

" The foolish boy is on some Quixotic expedition, and will get himself into trouble to no purpose," he mused, as he strolled alone, some few hundred yards from the din and turmoil of the host, to enjoy the calm beauty of the moonlit landscape and commune in tranquillity with his own thoughts—not the happiest, for he was troubled with dark conjectures as to the fate of Euphemia as well as Hugh, with that of many others in whom he took a kindly interest. He thought, too, of Alphonse Fitzpatrick, and whether Maurice O'Driscoll had got his letter, telling of her misadventure, and counselling him now to push his fortune by a bold sally, and so secure the prize from all future contingency ; then, by easy transition, he glided into a reverie about Florence Esmond, which insensibly chased the shadows from his brow ; for, associated with the charming vision were dreams of love, glory, and ambition

* Rev. Mr. Gordon's " History of the Rebellion."

† Kavanagh's " History of the Insurrection."

realised, a free country wherein to dwell, and high place redeemed among the magnates of the land. A smile was upon his lip and a beam upon his brow when Kitty and Moll Doyle, who had watched him sauntering off alone, and not impressed with romantic notions of the charms betimes found in solitude, tramped after him and most disagreeably and *mal-à-propos* interrupted his meditation, Kitty in querulous tone crying:

"Arrah, captain jewel, d'ye think any harum could 'ave coome to my little boy. Shure I'd break my heart afther him, an' he all I have in the world."

Moll Doyle chimed in: "*Och hone! ferriergare!* an' there's my two craythers, an' poor Miss Effie, an' doesn't know this minit if it's living or dead they are. *Ulla! ulla!*"

Miles's heart was touched with sympathy for the maternal anxiety of the women; so repressing the petulant humour that tempted him to resent their intrusion, he answered, kindly: "Let us hope the best; you know the proverb: 'God's help is nearer than the door,' and those whom our arms cannot reach we must commit to his care. As to Ned, when he comes I think I'll throunce him for playing such gambols at such a time. 'Tis growing dark; let us return."

To the camp, conversing as they walked along on many topics of interest to them, slowly they wended their way. On reaching their goal they separated, the women to their quarters, and Miles to the tent of the general; than to one whom more ill-qualified to bear such high command, he had often felt with sorrow, the conduct of emprise so weighty was never worse committed. Of most questionable intrepidity of character, and wholly unskilled in the tactics of war, deficient in every essential point of military genius, and chosen merely on the merit of his vast landed territory, amiable private character, and kind, liberal principles, to guide the national legions, never were characters more dissimilar, and less congenial, associated together, than that of Bagnal Harvey and Miles O'Byrne, in whom even personal worth seemed to assume deep shades of contrast. Silently, unobtrusively, Miles glided unnoticed into

the tent where the general was holding council with some of the insurgent leaders as to their next programme of action. Harvey perceived him as he stood in the distance, shaded behind the heavy curtain drawn back from the entrance, but cared not to engage in the debate the kinsman whose cynical humour he dreaded, and whose opinions rarely coincided with his own. No favourite was Miles O'Byrne with Bagnal Harvey, or indeed, generally speaking, with those who did not know him well enough to appreciate qualities of head and heart, concealed beneath the husk of phlegmatic self-possession and cold reserve: hence, uncourted, unsolicited, no prominent post was conferred upon, or distinguished his place in the camp, where he was regarded, save when in brunt of battle, as rather an apathetic champion by his own; while thrown casually among adverse ranks, like flint and steel clashing, the dormant fire blazing then forth unrestrained and vivid, he was considered a most ignitable spirit and heartwhole rebel. With watchful eyes intent upon the discussion in which he was summoned to take no part, Miles stood against the post of the entrance, motionless for some time, and might have so continued absorbed in attention till the debate had come to an issue, but for the unexpected apparition of Ned Burke's face peering in at the threshold, and his voice in low tone saying to someone without: "I don't see Mr. Miles among 'em."

"Here I am," said Miles, at once coming forth out of the tent. "I say, my boy, where have you been since yesterday?—your garb isn't becoming."

"In Wexford town, sir," returned Ned, with a smirk of drollery twinkling in his eye, not at all cowed by the austere gaze of his master, who drily returned:

"Indeed! What doing, pray?" And as he put the question Hugh came up, laughing.

"Here I am again, thanks to Ned;—and yet I don't know that I should thank him so much, as but for his interference I might have been now in glory, as that wheyfaced young parson, Sardanapalus Pomfret, this morning assured me, as I lay awaiting the gibbet, with the *addendo*, to be sure, of my conversion as a necessary con-

dition affixed thereto, and a Bible warrant certificate. How I hate those Pharisees! What are you all doing down here?"

"Standing still, till the enemy gain time to recover breath and recruit," returned Miles, bitterly. "Meantime, as we've plenty of leisure, I should be glad to hear how Ned contrived your emancipation: it must have tasked his ingenuity."

"So it did, sir," said the boy, with free, unembarrassed mien, quite unconscious of any extraordinary desert on his part. "Whin I heerd Mr. Hugh was taken prisoner an' fetched ye word, seein' nothing could be done for him, I thought I'd jist say nothin' to anyone, but go myself back to Wexford, an' s thrive for to see the ladies an' let them know, thinkin' perhaps they might speak a word for him, or any way get leave for me to see him."

Here Ned paused, observing Miles's cheek and brow had flushed; the latter saying: "Go on."

He resumed: "I met a sweep on the way, sir, an' fearin' lest I'd be known in the town for belongin' to ye, an' taken prisoner, maybe, or shot, I gave him all the money I had to give me his clothes an' take mine; so we exchanged, an' thin I went on my way."

"Very good, Ned; go on," smiled Hugh; "the best of the story is to come."

Ned proceeded: "I went to the hotel, sir, an' sint up a message to Miss Esmond that a boy wanted to speak to her. I was afeard to say anything else, sir."

"Go on," said Miles.

"Well, sir, all I could say or do, no one would take the message unless I told my business, an' who I was, an' who sint me, an' the boy, Cary, who was such a civil sneak while we had the town, set on me and cuffed and kicked me, and called me names; so I got afeard to stop any longer, an' come away—but to take another plan. I climbed on the roof, an' went along till I got to a chimney that looked convenient to the rooms her friends owned, and let myself down."—Miles's visage now began to expand in lines and curves; Ned, also displaying a broad grin, continued:—"I got down, sir, but into a room that

was full of quality at dinner. There was Miss Esmond, and Miss Courtney, an' the captain and his wife, and Miss Fitzpatrick, and a strange gentleman sitting next her, and the two Captain Esmonds, and a parson, and Lord Carhampton, and Lord Kingsborough, and Mr. Colandisk and a lot of waiters. I never was so taken on the hip at such a sight."

"Go on, go on," cried Miles, amused beyond expression. "What did they say at such an apparition among them, this goodly company?"

"They all stared, sir, an' the waiter shouted: 'Get along out o' this, ye villain; ye've come down the wrong chimney;' an' they run to put me out; but I cotch a hold o' Miss Esmond, an' winked at her; an' thin the two lords jumped up, an' swore I was a croppy that escaped, an' was run for my life, an' that they'd make an end of me; but Miss Esmond said, 'No;' that I had asked her protection, and should have it; an' that she'd resent any hurt to me, as done to herself. Then her brothers scolded, and made fun of her; but Miss Courtney took her part, and so did the strange gentleman, and said he'd shoot anyone would touch me. Thin Miss Esmond asked me was I hungry, and I said I was—but it was more to get time to speak to her;—so she took me herself over to a corner of the room, an' bid me sit down on a little stool while the waiter fetched me a plate, and thin I whispered in her ear Mr. Miles's brother, Mr. Hugh, was taken prisoner; an' she got very pale, an' made a sign to me to say no more. So she went back to the table, and after awhile I seen her and Miss Courtney whispering together; and then they whispered to the strange gentleman and Miss Fitzpatrick; and after some time, while the company were talking of the war—the only thing they did talk about—the strange gentleman says, 'So you've got Hugh O'Byrne among the prisoners, I hear?' 'As safe as a rat in a trap, and under sentence to swing to-morrow,' said Mr. Colandisk; 'but how the deuce did you know that, O'Driscoll? And if 'twas to serve him brought you down here, you might have spared the pains. Government is determined to make an example of every insurgent, and all we want is the rebel Miles to hang

along with him.' Well, sir, while they were speaking, Miss Esmond whispered to a waiter, who came over quite civil, an' bid me follow him. She looked at me to go; so I went, and after awhile the ladies came into the room where I was put, to tea; so they came and spoke to me, and then I told them who I was, and everything; and soon after the strange gentlemen came in with Lieutenant Percy Esmond, and they had a great deal of talk among themselves, and the gentlemen went in and out; an' at last, when it was late in the night, they come again, and the lieutenant said to Miss Courtney, who was crying: 'Don't be such a fool, Ethel; dry your eyes. We've got the permit to see the prisoner for just half an hour, and take leave of him. Get ready quick!' So at once they all got on their cloaks; and Miss Esmond came up and said I was to go with them, and I did;—and Mr. Hugh knows all the rest."

Miles turned to Hugh, who now spoke: "Just as you've heard: I was confined in the jail of Wexford, awaiting my end at hand, when the door opened, and instead of the turnkey, who should walk in but O'Driscoll, who had the night before got your letter and hurried down to Wexford to see Alphonse Fitzpatrick and take charge of the recovered prize. She, Florence Esmond, and dear little Ethel Courtney, accompanied him, to say, as it were, a few kind parting words to the condemned felon, which done, they peacefully retired; while that noble fellow, O'Driscoll, who stayed behind, made me exchange clothes with him, to which I never had consented, had he not sworn and pledged to his safety and immunity from consequence, in the fact that Florence Esmond had in person pleaded with Lord Carhampton, and Alphonse Fitzpatrick bribed his lordship with a good sum of gold, payable within a month, to obtain the interview and favour my escape, without risk to himself. So O'Driscoll and I changed clothes and place, he remaining in the cell, while I also, favoured by the well-fed turnkey, walked forth with our fair friends to freedom; met Percy at the gate, to whom I rendered them; and with many grateful thanks for their kind service, having made my adieux to all, accompanied by Ned, I set off for our camp, and here I am."

"And here's a package Miss Esmond gave me for you, sir," added Ned, drawing a small parcel from his bosom and handing it to Miles, who received it with most reverential hand, and, opening, found it to contain a miniature likeness of herself, set in pearls, a braid of her golden hair, and a few lines in writing, which, having perused, he folded again, and replaced all in his bosom; then turning, he held out his hand to Ned, saying:

"You are a good, faithful fellow, and if things speed well with us, fear not but you shall be rewarded as a friend."

"Oh, sir! I'd do more than that for Mr. Hugh or for yourself," responded the lad, who did not pride himself upon the greatness of his achievement in rescuing from death a well-beloved master. His sole happiness was in the success of his emprise, and that he held to be reward sufficient.

Hugh said nothing, but he thought not the less deeply; and while all three stood silent a moment, and Ned was thinking of paying a visit to his mother and Moll Doyle, O'Duffy came up with tidings that orders were come from the encampment at Limbrick Hill for the insurgent force to march to reinforce Father John's squadrons, who were expecting the English army, under Generals Dundas and Loftus to attack their position on the morrow.

"Bedad, sir, that's good news!" cried Ned, joyously. "I wish it was in Father John's own squadron we were, for wid the sign o' the cross over it there's no batin' 'em; an' shure what could we have expected at New Ross but defeat undher the ginerall that niver bint his knee to ask for a blessin'. I hope he won't bring us ill-luck."

"I hope not, Ned," returned Miles, gravely. "But go and see your mother, who is uneasy about you, and take what rest you can before we are again under march."

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

BRITISH AND CELTIC WARRIORS HOLD A GRAND TOURNAMENT
ON VINEGAR HILL.—FORTY THOUSAND CHAMPIONS MEET
IN THE LISTS.—PRIZE OF THE FIELD: A NATION.

“ And when they tread the ruined isle,
Where rest at length the lord and slave,
They'll wondering ask how hands so vile
Could conquer hearts so brave ?”

MOORE.

EARLY on the morning of the sixteenth, the insurgents set out from Limbrick Hill, without encountering an enemy on their march, till at Tinahealy their advanced guard came up with an equal force of the royalists, whom they put to flight with their usual impetuous charge. Early on the following day the united forces of Loftus and Dundas came in sight of the formidable array marshalled on Mount Pleasant, and witnessing the military discipline they exhibited, with their dauntless bearing—belieing their boasted vaunt, that the “bloody croppy rebels” would fly on the appearance of their overwhelming force—the English troops halted in the distance, while the despised foe, commanded to advance, charged at a quick pace down the hill, and once again, swept before the irresistible charge of the pikemen, the serried lines of Britain broke, and the mighty host melted away and drifted like thunder-clouds dispersed by tempest, the cavalry vainly attempting to cover their retreat from the pursuing army, as it hung upon their rere. Night at length closed in, and laden with spoil and prisoners, the victors returned to their camp, where tidings of the failure of the insurrection in Kildare and Dublin, and of the

rumoured immediate invasion of the country by Buona-parte, having reached them, it was decided in hastily convened council to march to Kilcavin Hill, and compel General Lake, stationed at Gorey, to give them battle. After a brief rest they set out, and advanced to the walls of the town, where the troops were drawn up in preparation for an attack. The scanty artillery of the insurgents was soon brought to the front, and began to play on the lines of the enemy, who replied with spirit, while the pikemen pushed rapidly forward to engage the redcoats, who slowly retreated before them. The main body of the patriots awaited upon the hill orders from their leaders, then busy in council debating upon the contents of dispatches from General Harvey, to the effect that, being unable to maintain his position before Ross, he was forced to fall back with his division to cover Wexford, and that he deemed it expedient the forces now on Kilcavin Hill should set out for Vinegar Hill, to act in concert with the army under him. The expedience of the measure having been discussed among the chiefs, it was agreed to abandon the attack upon General Lake, and hasten to the reinforcement of Bagnal Harvey. The same night, accordingly, the insurgent corps, in the dawning flush of their success, were summoned to resume their march to Vinegar Hill, their movements still impeded by the vast multitude of women and children that sought protection beneath their ægis from the English soldiers, whose enormities, as they issued from their entrenchments and hung upon the rears of the weary champions of freedom, no tongue might describe, no history record. Well-nigh famished and exhausted, the gallant cohort, sheltered by the rear-guard, arrived at nightfall at their destination, and there encamped, a hundred fires lighting up the dark scene, and the deep and solemn murmur of the great multitude, borne upon the night wind, sounded sad and mournful to the ear as requiem over tombs.

On the morning of the 19th, Miles O'Byrne, who had been from an early hour patrolling round the vicinity of the bivouac, with one or two others, descried, by the aid of a glass, a considerable force of horse, foot, and artillery

marching towards them. They at once gave the alarm, and Father Philip Roche, a bold and dashing leader, at once ordered the force under his command to prepare for battle. To this Captain T. Cluny objected, urging the rashness of hazarding a conflict at odds, which could but result in defeat to their small band; hence, having yielded to the opinion of his sage adviser, the insurgents effected, by strategic manœuvre, a hasty retreat to the encampment on the Three Rocks, where they heard, on their arrival, that Sir John Moore, with a large force, was stationed at Longraig, between Ross and Wexford, in consequence of which intelligence, at daybreak next morning, the reinforced legions set out to give battle to 15,000 chosen troops, under the command of one of the ablest generals in the English service.

Arrived at Goff's Bridge, within sight of the enemy, the gunmen marshalled into line, four deep, amounting to 650 men. At this critical juncture, one of the leaders, acting as he had hitherto done at Ross, left the field, at the head of his corps, under the pretence of taking up a position to cut off the enemy in case of defeat; while Captain Cluny was remonstrating with the dastard, Father Roche ordered his line to advance. The conflict, opened with vigour, was maintained for four hours with considerable slaughter, the gunmen pouring their fire upon the English line till their ammunition was exhausted, and two fresh cavalry regiments, under Lord Dalhousie, approached to reinforce the troops, and compelled them to retreat.*

Alarmed now in right earnest at the difficulty of quelling the stubborn spirit exorcised by fiendish means to achieve vile design upon the nation's legislative independence, Government arose in its might, and hastened to put forth all its strength to grapple with, not a powerful province—a rival kingdom—but two small counties, whose half-armed peasantry had alone chivalrously sprung to the war challenge, and, hand-in-hand withstood the shock and brunt of the mailed phalanx of Britain, and still put

* Sir John Moore's despatches, which describe this as a sharp, brisk action, were suppressed,

forth its prowess with undiminished ardour, to hurl the oppressor from the soil, and rend the country's chains. From all quarters regiments were now converging in overwhelming force to make a combined onslaught on the insurgent host: General Dundas marched from Baltinglass to form a junction with General Loftus; Major-General Needham set out from Arklow to Gorey on the 19th June; and on the evening of the 20th, General Moore took up a position at Fook's Mill; while Major-General Sir James Duff marched from Newtownbarry to join General Loftus at Scarawalsh, to await orders from General Lake, now posted at Solsborough. To aid the concentration of troops on land several men-of-war appeared off the coast, while gunboats blocked up the entrance of Wexford Harbour.

The loud war-trumpet at early dawn broke the deep slumber of the insurgent camp, and now brave hearts, strong hands, swiftly marshalling in battle ranks, front, flank, and rere, foot, horse, and cannon rolled along the serried host to take up the assigned position against the foe—twenty thousand English troops, led by six chosen generals, practised in every military manœuvre, furnished with a formidable artillery, and fresh and vigorous for the fray. Glinting in the rising sun, lance and broadsword flashed back the golden beams in rays of dazzling light, as right onward poured the swelling tide to hurl its submerging billows upon the opposing barrier, to stem whose rushing burst swayed and heaved the frowning sea of pikes before. From the deep array of the English lines rolled the thunder of cannon and rattle of musketry, with the booming of drum, and the ringing of clarion, as the advancing squadrons drew near, while the thrilling blast of pipes, and the war cries of the leaders were promptly answered by each Celtic corps, burning for the onslaught. Now converged, and concentrated upon the field, forty thousand men stood front-to-front—twenty thousand peasant patriots, ill-trained for war, and scantily equipped with war's necessary munitions, arrayed in bold, defiant attitude against twenty thousand men fitted out in martial panoply, and aided and abetted by a powerful Orange

oligarchy, all straining with them to one end—the destruction of their country, and the extermination of the magnanimous people, with whom they had never fraternised, could never fraternise. And now the hostile lines engage: as conflicting oceans with tumultuous roar surge, heave, and foam in rival strife, the squadrons closed in wild contending waves, amidst clouds of smoke that plume and shroud the battlefield, the levin flame flashes up to the very mouth of the cannon, the chivalry of Erin charged beneath the banners of their chiefs. Closing at weapon-point, a forest of pikes brandish and wave, amid a tide of broadswords; shriek and yell arose, portentous from the seething, recoiling, rallying, struggling mass, now commingled in chaotic confusion, now drifting in broken billow and eddying waves, plumed crests and glittering helmets borne wildly to and fro upon the hurricane that swept along, wavering banners tossed upon the storm, rising, sinking, beaten back, advanced. Blended with the cannon's roar, swells louder and ever louder the yell of maddened combatants, and shout, shriek, and groan commingled in dire chorus, as though all the fiends and furies, broke loose from their penal element, hovered in darkness, smoke, flame, and carnage over the scene; lances crash, and dented shields are born down where the pikemen dash, and swing their banded might upon the serried phalanx of the reeling foe, in that stern and desperate strife, upon whose issue all was staked dear to the patriot's heart. Hundreds of women, now inured to war, stood side by side with their warrior champions, and fought as dauntlessly and well; no fear of death, no flight for wound: unquailing, unflinching, shoulder to shoulder they fought, each closing the gap of slain comrade the moment he fell, and plying the ghastly weapon of death as vigorously and effectively in the stubborn contest.* The battle raged, and with fortitude superhuman the uncovered insurgents still stood the tremendous fire opened upon the four sides of their position, and the stream of

* The hospital, with a number of wounded insurgents, was set on fire by order of General Lake, who also commanded that all the wounded on the field and those found in houses should be put to death.

shells and grape poured upon them, mowing down whole ranks and lines. General Lake's horse was shot, and several officers were slain; yet, fast as hailstorm in December, pelted the iron shower upon the host, and steadily the British lines began to advance up the hill; billows urging billows, thousands of horsemen spurred, rushing on, bearing down the weary lines of the over-matched defenders. Onward, ever onward pressing, bayonets crossing pikes, and murderous fusilade opening their path, the brunt of strife began to flag, and at length, riddled beneath the ceaseless beating of the iron storm, the insurgents who had maintained for several hours the unequal struggle against such terrible odds, gave ground, and a retreat being ordered by the leaders, they set out for Wexford, protected by a force under General Roche. Among the slain were several of the chiefs, and Moll Doyle, with many other women, who had behaved with singular intrepidity on the field.

The town of Wexford, having surrendered to General Sir John Moore, the insurgents, in separate divisions, marched by different routes, one led by Gerald Byrne, Esmond Kyan, and Hugh O'Byrne in the direction of Gorey, while the second, consisting of an equal force of three thousand men, under the command of Father John Murphy, Miles O'Byrne, Miles Byrne, jun., and other leaders, proceeded *en route* for Carlow, halting at Three Rocks, Sludah, Longrig, and Killane, at which latter place they again routed a force of yeomanry sent to oppose them, thence continuing their march on the ensuing day they received intelligence of a force of cavalry and infantry advancing to Gore's Bridge, to intercept the passage of the Barrow, upon which they marched to meet the enemy. The 4th Dragoon Guards, whom, having been defeated in a fierce engagement, fell back on their infantry, the Wexford Militia, whom Miles, with astonishment, beheld headed, among other officers, by Maurice O'Driscoll, Percy Esmond, and Guildford Colandisk; but he had little respite for comment—a volley of musketry blazed along the line. The insurgents replied with spirit, and how much was his amazement augmented to find, when the war-cloud had

rolled away, that, having discharged a harmless fusilade, but one man having been wounded by Colandisk, who fired with truer aim, officers and men were galloping at the top of their speed from the field. Immediate pursuit being ordered, the insurgents gave chase, made many prisoners, of whom Esmond was one, and captured the town. Maurice O'Driscoll, overtaken in his flight with Guildford Colandisk, after a feeble show of resistance, was seized by Miles, to whom, with a smile of significance, he surrendered his sword. Guildford, with some others, escaped by hard riding, and the victors proceeded to Mount Leinster, where they pitched their camp for the night.

The moon, like a shield of silver, hung suspended that summer night in a cloudless firmament, bespangled with myriad glittering constellations, as though it were, in sooth, the regal dome of a spacious world, lighted with lamps for festive hour; and yet there was a whispering voice in the air—a moan in the languid breeze, as it swept mournfully by, waving, with gentle motion, the rustling boughs of the trees, and a murmur in the rippling waves of the gliding and winding river that boded of rain at hand and change in the weather.

Sad at heart and depressed in spirit, Miles O'Byrne and Maurice O'Driscoll, having left the camp after the midnight watch was changed, sauntered, side by side, through the solitary wilderness, reposing in the magical solemnity and stillness of moonlight, so clear and brilliant that all the surrounding country lay defined and open to view as in the blaze of day. While slowly they paced along, inhaling the soothing balm of the lulling hour and absorbed in converse, fearing no danger, and anticipating no interruption, Miles heard from Maurice, whom he had first reproached that he should have borne arms against his own countrymen, a full and satisfactory explanation of his conduct, and the motive that had impelled him to such a step:

"I had no alternative, Miles," pleaded the young man, earnestly, "having implicated myself in promoting the escape of Hugh from inevitable death, the wrath of his baffled enemies knew no bounds. Luttrell and Kingsborough, well bribed

to bear me scathless through, proved but lukewarm patrons at the call of need, in especial Luttrell, who, pleading fair to my face, had, I discovered, under the rose, connived, with Colandisk, to sanction and abet the designs of my accusers. It was Marmion Esmond, with Percy and Captain Courtney, who stood my friends, and suggested that I could easily vindicate my loyalty, suspected and impugned by my deed of temerity in favour of a personal friend, by taking an appointment in the Wexford Militia, and demonstrating my zeal in the cause by my activity against the rebels. Need I rehearse the sequel? Thankful for my escape, I accepted the commission, with the mental reservation, that no drop of patriot blood should stain my hand; but, when full soon I found that, among the corps, many there were whose hearts, were like mine, estranged from the tyrant's cause they were fated to serve. Little pain it gave me to dissuade nearly every man of them from the hateful task assigned them. Hence, this morn when we rode out, Colandisk beside me, a spy to watch and report my movements, my resolution was already made, with that of the brave fellows under me. Sent to the front to meet the first charge, we discharged our muskets in the air, then seized, as it were, with panic, turned and fled, carrying disorder and confusion into our own lines. My subsequent flight with the stout Colandisk was, as you know, a sham; for, long ere we had stood face to face in the ranks, I had recognised you, and longed to grasp your brave hand, as now I do. Are you satisfied?"

Miles wrung the hand extended to him :

"Yes, yes, Maurice; you had no alternative, and you have acted nobly and well. Doubt not but when I represent your case to our leaders you will be granted liberty without demur. I am only sorry we cannot let Esmond accompany you, and that we did not secure Colandisk. We are now glad to hold prisoners of note as ransom for any of ours taken in battle. But tell me, friend, some news of yourself and—and about the Courtneys and Ethel, and —," he longed to utter the name of Flora Esmond, but O'Driscoll's eye was upon his face, and somehow he felt his heart beat quicker and as if some rising tell-tale would

have betrayed his secret ; so, he added : "What about Alphonse ? Is there any prospect of her giving propitious ear to your suit ?"

Maurice now, in turn, pressed the hand of Miles, while his face glowed like the red harvest moon, warm and refulgent :

"Yes, Miles ; thanks to my good friend Hugh, and your gallant self, who brought it about. Alphonse—dear Alphonse—and I met once again, not as of yore, in cold, courteous ceremony, but in genial friendship. She told me all her story. How, in my heart, I blessed Colandisk, as the medium of my fortune. I suppose, by right, I should have called him out and shot him ; but, in truth, the dolt isn't worth a bullet, and I was in far too generous a frame of mind to think of horse-whipping him. However, he is dangerous withal, as a venomous snake crawling in the grass. Hence, I shall be glad of my liberty to get up to Dublin, whither she, now my own plighted bride, is gone with the Courtneys and Florence Esmond. By the way, what I'd give, Miles, to see you married to that girl : she ranks next in worth and beauty to my Alphonse, of all I ever met ; and, somehow, I've a notion she likes you." Miles coloured furiously, but O'Driscoll, not looking at him, went on : "Yes, I know, of course, Alphonse is now safe, quite safe, in the protection of her relatives and friends. What a dear fellow that brother of hers is—the priest ;—glad to think he shall be mine ; but, as I was saying, Alphonse is quite safe now, and my delighted mother has written to me that she is the happiest of women, in the prospect of another such child to love and cherish, with the probability of grandchildren *ad infinitum*. Still, Miles, I feel—I know how absurd it is, a yearning to be near my treasure ; an insane dread of some evil befalling her in my absence ; some calamity impending that my protecting presence could alone ward off. Yes, I shall be very glad, and store it up with all my other deep obligations to be duly requited, could you procure my speedy *carte blanche* of freedom"

"You shall have it to-morrow, my friend," said Miles. "I can understand and sympathise with your feelings, and you will discharge any obligation by being the bearer

of a message from me to Florence Esmond, whom, strange to say, I regard with sentiments I had once deemed it recreancy, impossible, to own to one of her race. Unlike, indeed, she is to her brothers, towards whom I entertain but one undiminished feeling of most hostile enmity.

"Yet, in sooth," returned O'Driscoll, "Marmion and Percy are not deficient of high and noble qualities; but when proud spirits oppose and clash, it is as though when Greek meets Greek.—Hist! what is that? Ho! stand to your defence, Miles; we are beset!"

It was even so. Just as they had turned out of a *boreen*, or lane, simultaneously with the loud report of firearms, and the whiz of a bullet so close as to singe O'Driscoll's hair, rose a shout of many voices, and suddenly they were surrounded by a party of seven or eight militia, led by Hunter Gowan, and in their midst was Guildford Colandisk. The lurid glare of the sky as Miles and Maurice emerged from the shade of overarching trees, and the shooting of sparks of fire and shafts of flame, amid wreaths of black spreading smoke from some neighbouring dingle in the valley, told plainly, though neither cry nor scream floated to their ears, on what nocturnal mission of evil was this picked crew of bad spirits roaming. But there was no time for thought. In answer to Miles's shrill whistle, Ned Burke, who sauntered in the rear, came bounding with speed, and the three instantly, setting their backs against a thickset hedge, levelled their pieces, and prepared to defend themselves to the last. O'Driscoll previously waved his handkerchief for parley, and, addressing Colandisk, said:

"Ten to two is unfair odds, Guildford, for by right I should stand aside; nevertheless, though the insurgent's prisoner, Miles O'Byrne is my friend, and as such I may not stand by and witness the unequal strife without lending succour. So bide the issue."

"Confound you! didn't we always know you were a rebel at heart!" cried Colandisk, fiercely. "Here goes!—dead or alive, the croppy chief's my aim, and you for a deserter."

"And there's the chap beside him that robbed old

Watkins's till and absconded," shouted two troopers, whose ill-favoured appearance had been so immensely increased by the lives of vicious profligacy they had been leading, that till they spoke Ned Burke had not recognised the bloated visage of Beaky and the cadaverous one of Tickell, his quondam fellow-apprentices. Now he knew them, and shuddered as the lifted carbines covered his head. There was but one moment's pause as the muskets of all were brought to a level, and each thumb rested on the trigger. In that pause the ear of Miles, preternaturally sharpened by nervous excitement to the smallest sound, heard a voice say close beside him, and in hurried whisper :

"Now, Nelly, now; fire away!"

In that pause between life and death there was the click of a pistol, two loud reports, two yells of agony; now a rattle of musketry, two more pistol-shots, two more howls, and a stampede of Hunter Gowan and his men. Confounded, bewildered, when the smoke that blinded them dispersed away, Miles, Ned, and O'Driscoll found two men lying dead at their feet, and Colandisk, with his wrist broken and a flesh wound in his leg, striving to limp away from the scene of his disaster; while the authors of the mischief, scrambling through the hedge, exhibited themselves in the small persons of Effie O'Byrne and Nelly Doyle, considerably dilapidated in garb and appearance by some weeks of vagrant wandering and hardship and their present frightened aspect. Nevertheless, they smiled and laughed, and Effie, regardless of her plight, and the presence of a stranger, twined her arms around Miles, as he exclaimed, "My poor child!" and bent to embrace her. And Nelly shook hands with Ned, asking in the same breath for her mother and Johnny; but Ned, seeing Colandisk essay flight, and aware of the value of prisoners, without other reply than "More power to ye, Nelly! You an' Miss Effie, God bless her! gave us a timely help," sprung after the fugitive and hauled him back, lamenting and expostulating upon such cruelty. Then Miles, taking the prisoner in charge, and whispering to Maurice: "You may go; I'll take upon myself to acquit you of your

parole," which liberty O'Driscoll magnanimously declined to avail of till he had seen his friend, now *en route* for the camp, within its precincts and out of all danger. So he walked behind, listening amused to Nelly assuring Ned that it was her own hand had shot the two men dead, for she aimed steady to the mark; while Miss Effie, with her two shots, had only wounded the other villain, where she ought to have killed her two; but she was too quick, and didn't take her time. And then Nelly, with a business-like air, proceeded to reload her pair of pistols from a pouch slung by her side, while Effie, in self-defence, made answer:

"I was so frightened when I saw him take aim at Miles, I thought I'd never be in time, and my hand shook so; but it's all right. I'm glad he's only wounded; I wouldn't like to kill anyone if I could help it. What a pack of cowards they were!"

"But tell me, my little maid," said O'Driscoll, who had no idea of the relationship between her and Miles, "how comes it that so opportunely for us you and your companion were roving by moonlight, instead of sleeping, like the birds, snug and quiet in your nest?"

Miles, who heard the question, drew near to listen. Effie replied, as if addressing him:

"Since the yeomen came upon us in the farmhouse of Art O'Duffy, where you left us, Miles—and which they burned to the ground after we all escaped in time, everyone flying a different way only Nelly and I, who kept together—for a good while we lay out in the fields. Then at long last we met Meelan Conroy, with her strange child. It was a wet day, and we were cold and hungry; so she brought us home with her, where do you think, but to a room she had settled very snug for herself in an old castle, and we stayed with her there till somehow we thought it was haunted, and the woman was always ailent, and the child used to say such queer things; and at last, sure enough, one night Nelly saw something, and we used to hear strange noise and have such troubled dreams, we got frightened and said we'd run away, and so we did; and it was hiding in the ditch we were from the soldiers,

when we saw you and Ned and this gentleman coming along ; and when we saw them attack you we whispered to each other to fire at them and kill as many as we could to help you. That's how it is."

"And bravely you did, my little heroine," smiled O'Driscoll, while Miles said :

"And where's the castle, Effie, in which Meelan Conroy has made herself a home ? I should like to see her again."

"'Tis a great way off, Miles, in Wicklow ; I'd hardly know how to tell you the way from this."

"Never mind ; perhaps we'll find it on our march. Will you come with me, you and Nelly, to the camp ? Kitty is there."

"Yes, we will ; I'll be so glad to see Kitty," cried Euphemia, eagerly.

"And is my mother with her, sir?" said Nelly. "She'll be sorry to hear we lost poor Larry the night we were burned out. I'm afeard the yeos got hold of him, or he'd have surely come after us."

Miles felt he could not answer to the interrogation of the anxious child ; he merely said : "Kitty will tell you everything, little one ; let us hasten on. How long is it since you left the castle, Effie?"

"Six or seven days, Miles. How is, Hugh ?—is he at the camp?"

"No ; he went with Gerald to Gorey ; but he was well when I last saw him. The moon is gone down, and the sky is lowering ; I see we shall have a wet morrow ;—and yonder is our camp."

"I'm afeard there's something amiss up there, sir. I see men hurrying to and fro, and signs of commotion," said Ned Burke, steadfastly gazing upon the heights they were approaching, looming dark and heavy in the clouded dawn.

Miles, falling back, not to be observed by Colandisk limping sullenly in advance, said to O'Driscoll : "Now's your time ; God bless you ; farewell !" Each silently pressed the other's hand, and O'Driscoll, turning, disappeared in the obscurity, as if he had escaped his guard.

Upon reaching the camp Miles, handing the prisoner Colandisk over to the proper authority, demanded of Father John Murphy, who just then came up, with every sign of perturbation and wrath disturbing his usually serene countenance, had anything gone wrong among them in his absence; at the same time his eye fell upon the forms of O'Hart, O'Brien, Neil More, and Mooney, O'Loughlin and others, handcuffed and looking like scowling culprits, gloomy and disconcerted, before the eye of their indignant priest and leader.

"Yes, sir," returned Father John, severely, "I am disappointed in my men; I had thought myself the leader of brave soldiers, instead of midnight assassins. Question these fellows yourself, whom I am going to expel from among us, of the cause, which it freezes my blood to think but of."

Miles turned and looked at the culprits, who maintained dogged silence, till O'Hart spoke bold and daring:

"I'll tell ye what we did, sir; an' the dickens a bit sorry we are for the same; an' if his riverence, God bless him, had suffered himself the villainies we had sworn to rivinge back upon the villains who had injured us, an' made us what we are, maybe he wouldn't be so hard on us entirely. We fell upon some of the worst of the prisoners, our black Orange inimies, and paid 'em back all arrears in full. Troth we did put it out of their power to hurt us or ours agin, an' if his riverence turns agin us for the same, why, we must only put up wid it."

Miles, without waiting to hear more, leaving Effie and Nelly to speak to Father John, whose ruffled brow cleared and softened at sight of the children, he hurried in quest of Percy Esmonde for whose fate dreadful misgivings deafened him to the voice of Guildford Colandisk screaming after him:

"O'Byrne—Miles—friend—I say, you won't take the mean revenge of leaving me with these outthroats? For heaven's sake come back!—take me with you! I'll go on my knees to swear I'll do anything you please; I'll give you any ransom! Oh, oh, oh! what will become of me! O good priest!—holy man!—protect me. I am a convert;

I will go to Mass—anything you wish—only save me from these monsters thirsting for my blood.”

“Hush, hush, sir; cease your unmanly cries. No one is going to harm you,” said Father John; “but we must retain you prisoner for the present, and you shall be treated as well as our exigencies can admit of.”

He turned away, holding a hand of each of the children, while Ned Burke directed his steps after his master, whom he found holding earnest colloquy with Percy Esmond, whose hand was locked in his; while Kitty stood by, assuring him that the boys never meant to hurt a hair of the young gentleman's head, seeing he had never done 'em any harm; an' that she came herself, knowing he was befriended by Mr. Miles, an' stood near him to keep up his heart, an' protect him for fear them as didn't know him would think him as bad as the rest, finding him among 'em: all which Percy, who was deeply agitated and shocked by the sight of ten or twelve of his comrades sprung upon in slumber, and butchered around him, by their incensed and implacable foes, fully corroborated. Then Miles, in further guarantee of good faith, addressed him, as arm-in-arm he led him forth:

“It is incumbent on us, as you may understand, Percy, to hold you our prisoner pending an exchange on both sides, when this calamitous period shall have drawn to a close; nevertheless, though so little faith has been kept with us by our deceitful, and, I am sorry to add, ignoble adversaries, yet, if you pledge me your word, as a man of honour, that you will not belie the better opinion I entertain of you, by taking unfair advantage of my implicit confidence, I shall interest myself with our chiefs to have you retained merely as prisoner on parole, till some turn of fortune may set you free.”

“Thanks, Miles, thanks,” returned Percy, disclosing in every altered lineament the relief of his spirit at this speech. “You may trust me without hesitation. You are a good fellow, I do believe, though a confounded rebel, and I stick to my belief that though you fought well on the Hill,*

* Vinegar Hill.

and have pitched into us pretty often, we'll drub you yet, and you are doing well to make a friend in time. What's Colandisk howling for?—are they going to gibbet him? I must say some of our fellows are arrant cowards, and no loss to be rid of them."

"I agree with you in that much," said Miles. "Ned, my boy, take out Tippoo Saib, and at the top of your speed overtake O'Driscoll. Let him have the animal to help his journey, and caution him to care it well."

CHAPTER XXXIX.

DEATH OF FATHER JOHN MURPHY.

" 'Tis come—his hour of martyrdom
In Iran's sacred cause is come;
And, though his life has passed away,
Like lightning on a stormy day,
Yet shall his death hour leave a track
Of glory permanent and bright,
To which the brave of after times,
The suffering brave, shall long look back."

FIRE WORSHIPPERS.

To whom is it given to interpret the occult mysteries of the human heart, to analyse the ever-fluctuating phases of its impulses, emotions, and sympathies? Nay, the very object acted upon, the owner and possessor of the organ affected by transmutation, and vibrating like an instrument of many chords to every lightest touch of the tuner, is unable to explain the abstruse question, to fathom the unexplored depth, and reach the hidden spring that propels the intricate machinery of human life, thought, and action. Kitty Burke who but, as we have seen lately, had bewailed with genuine affliction the supposed death of her friend and kinswoman, Moll Doyle, on the battlefield, and would not be comforted, now when that event had actually come to pass, and she had seen the brave woman struck

down by her side, and left among the gory ranks of the slain on Vinegar Hill, no tear came to her eye, no lamentation to her lip. In silence shouldering her well-used pike, she trudged along in the retreat with her dispirited comrades: silent she had since continued, and still silent she sat apart on a hillock, resting her chin on her hand, alternately gazing upon the dawn, breaking in misty rain and drooping skies, and upon the strange scene before her; hundreds of weary men locked fast in sleep, with weapons in every hand to guard that needful rest, and hundreds of fires dotting the extensive vista, surrounded by swarms of busy women preparing the morning meal of whatever material supplied by the spoil of war—hags, porridge, hearthbread, &c.; while prisoners, jealously guarded, scowled upon their scowling sentinels with impotent wrath. Contemplating one conspicuous among these, by his clamorous complaints and obstreperous demeanour, was Kitty for a moment beguiled of her moody thoughts, when a light, cheery laugh fell upon her ear, in company with a well-known voice, crying out gleefully:

"There she is!—that's herself, sure enough!" The next moment, with a spring and a bound, Euphemia and Nelly were looked to her bosom, and Kitty, overwhelmed with excess of feeling, then gave vent to a loud and violent fit of weeping, all the more violent from the reaction of the overcharged heart. But little time was afforded for the greeting of absent friends, or hurried question, or slow response. The trumpet sounded suddenly to march. Up rose at the signal the slumbering troops, and falling into rank, they snatched, as they filed along for Dunaine, at morsels of food, half-cooked meat, lumps of dough, and half-baked bread, to support them on the way. At Dunaine, where they arrived at five in the morning, joined by some Kilkenny colliers, Father John proceeded to attack an English force stationed at Castlecomer. The town was soon taken, with the loss of fifty of the garrison, when loud volleys of musketry in the distance announced the arrival of Sir Charles Asgil, with a squadron from Kilkenny, to the aid of the royal troops in Castlecomer. The insurgents, hastening from the town to meet them,

speedily came in sight of the enemy, drawn up in line of battle, and awaited the signal for attack, instead of which they beheld once again the entire division of the English general, horse, foot, and artillery, wheel about and commence a rapid retreat to Kilkenny, whither they were at once followed by the seemingly invincible foe, who, marching through the miserably apathetic population of Kilkenny and Queen's County, without gaining a recruit or encountering a foe, directed their route to reunite their force to that which had proceeded on the 21st of June in the direction of Wicklow. Encamping for the night on the hill of Kilcomney, on the ensuing morning great was the dismay and consternation of the gallant insurgents upon discovering an act of unparalleled treachery perpetrated upon them by their Kilkenny reinforcement, who not only deserted in the night, but had plundered and carried off to their pits and dens all their fire-arms, leaving them nearly defenceless in the midst of their numerous assailants. Nevertheless, "the grand spirit that had animated these heroic men from the outset still upheld them under their accumulated misfortune." Word having been brought by scouts to Father John, while in the act of bemoaning, with Miles O'Byrne and others of his chiefs, the heavy loss they had suffered at the hands of their false allies, the depraved descendants of the early Kilkenny colonists of the Pale, whose parliamentary statutes we have on record, that the king's troops, converging from several quarters, were gathering round them, the priestly warrior gave instant orders to force the pass of Scollagh Gap, and at the head of four thousand men he advanced to the charge. The soldiery stationed in the defile made but feeble resistance to the furious harpoon assault, and once more the Lion and Unicorn of England ignominiously fled the field. Nor did Sir Charles Asgil, at the head of four thousand trained veterans, deem it prudent to engage in their support against such belligerents. Having triumphantly achieved their project, and gained their desired goal, the victorious insurgents halted, and while the gallant pikemen wiped the blood and sweat from their brow, and respired brief space from inaction,

the leaders convened in council to debate upon what steps should next be taken.

"Dwyer and his men are posted at the wood of Kil-aughrim," said Miles O'Byrne. "What if we sped thither? 'Tis but five miles, and Dwyer's will prove no weak reinforcement to our division."

"But Dwyer may be for carrying out plans of his own that may run counter to ours, and so change our tactics," said Doyle of Donard, another leader of note, giving his opinion freely, while lighting and smoking a short pipe with infinite relish, and he dived one hand into his fob-pocket and looked at Miles with a grim yet pleasant countenance, full of humour, as he added, glancing at his harpoon, trickling with gore: "Ain't it better for us take no partners in the business while we can carry it on our own shoulders?"

"It was Father John's plan," said Cavanagh of Arklow, another leader, "that the men were to march right on to join the division in Wicklow. Where's Father John? Let's hear him. Did anyone see Father John? Go look someone for Father John."

"Miles," said Miles O'Byrne, addressing his young kinsman, "go you and Ned and look for Father John, and say we want him here, while I just turn into the women's division and see what's doing. I hope none of our prisoners have slipped away. I left Kitty with Johnny Doyle and some others in charge over them, to keep her and that troublesome child Effie out of danger, else they'd have been in the thick of the fight." He went his way, and Miles junior, with Ned Burke, set out in quest of Father John, asking of all whom they met for the priest. None had seen him, none could give information of the missing leader. The shades of eve began to fall, and still went round the call and the search for him who never more should answer to the call of friend or foe, who never more, save in dream or vision, should be seen on earth! Alas! for his friends and native land he had loved so faithfully and served so well, the course of the warrior priest and patriot was run, and in the hour that was tiding him to victory, fame, and glory, the Fates had cut short his span. Riding out after the battle to

reconnoitre the field, he, the arch-insurgent, most redoubted and terrible of all, of whose dread power and dark and fearful spells hatred, awe, and terror were rife in fabricating tales of horror to scare the credulous, he, surprised by snare, fell into the hands of the cruel foe, whose vindictive malice, alone exceeding cowardly terror, full soon wreaked upon the captive atrocities only equalled by those recorded of O'Hurley and many of our martyrs—insulted, scourged,* consumed by fire. Well the champion proved his gallant cause, and wrestled in conflict final and severe with demons for the conqueror's crown in a happier world. But, oh! for the hearts that mourned him in this, when at last the astounding tidings were borne to their ears of the untimely doom of him whom with their heart's blood each man of that host had ransomed! So hushed in awe was every bosom, a pin had been heard to fall in the insurgent camp! Then, with streaming eyes and inward vows, the mournful host separated into two divisions, one party taking the direction of the Wicklow mountains, the other marching to Killaughrim wood!

* * * * *

Meanwhile the division of the Wexford force, under Gerald Byrne, Kyan, Roche, and Murphy, about seven thousand men, after many conflicts with the foe, frequent defeat and much loss, unable to maintain their ground, had set out towards the Wicklow mountains to join their forces at this rallying-point to the detachment led by Father Murphy. Passing through Gorey their road "was strewn with the dead and horribly-mangled bodies of women and children, many with their bowels ripped open, presenting a ghastly spectacle;" for the English soldiery and Orange yeomanry, who had taken shelter within their entrenchments from the storm of insurgent warfare, had sallied from their lurking-places and overrun the country, flooding it with the blood of those whose infirmity or debility hindered their marching under the banners of their absent protectors against this sanguinary horde of murderers, consisting of the regiment of Ancient

* He received five hundred lashes at the outset.

Britons and the yeomanry corps, led by Hunter Gowan, Beaumont of Hyde Park, Ram of Gorey, White of Middleton, and the Earls of Courtown and Mountnorris—names accursed in Irish story. The insurgent cohort swiftly directed their arms, and having in many a fearful reprisal well avenged their massacred wives, mothers, and children, they set out for their destination, still ever as they passed briskly repulsing the enemy hanging on their rear and obstructing them in front till they gained Croghan Hill, one of the Wicklow mountains, where they rested for a couple of days, and on the 29th set out to attack the town of Carnew, halting for a short space at Monasud, which village they had scarcely quitted when the cavalry regiment of Ancient Britons, with several corps of mounted yeomanry, arrived, elate with the prospect of sure victory now at last over the insurgents, harassed by long march and dearth of provisions. About a mile from Carnew they came to a road, bounded on one side by a deer-park, and on the left by a ditch running through swampy ground. While riding at full gallop along the route thus enclosed, their advance was arrested by a barricade of carts thrown across the road, and before they had time to progress or retreat, a deliberate fire, every shot of which told, riddled their ranks, and emerging amid smoke and din and uproar from their ambush, Gerald and Hugh Byrne, O'Hart, O'Duffy, Kyan, Roche, and Murphy in the van of their pikemen, charged into the midst of the surprised dragoons. The conflict, sharp, stern, and brief, was decisive; in half an hour every man of that ferocious Ancient Briton regiment had found his master, and bit the dust, not one of them who had ridden forth that morn in the flush of anticipated conquest, to riot in the blood of the foe, took back his own life from the fatal encounter. The yeomanry, surveying the scene of slaughter from a safe distance, fled, as was their wont, swearing that they warred with infernal legions, not to be vanquished by mortal men, while the exulting victors cheering the stampede, grouped around, and clasped the hand of Dwyer and Miles O'Byrne, who had ridden hard over just in time to warn them of the pursuit and attack, of which they had received timely intelligence by scouts along the way. Without pause to

rest, the chiefs, at the head of their victorious host, marched onward, and after some fruitless attempts to storm the garrison at Carnew, they proceeded to encamp on Ballyrakeen Hill for the night. Early the ensuing day troops of the various corps of infantry, impelled by rage, and burning to redeem their lost prestige, marched in serried squadrons, horse and foot, to attack the enemy, who with equal spirit, and their wonted impetuosity, charged in firm phalanx down the slope of the hill on the foe's lines, and "in vain the hostile cavalry essayed to check, by their furious onslaught, that unyielding cohort of brothers who fought in the sacred cause of country: every man in the insurgent ranks was a hero, resolved to conquer or perish where he stood." To break the stubborn forest of pikes the horse charged like a tempestuous shock, and careering, swept like whirlwinds upon the compact embattled array. In vain the levin shower belched in thunder and lightning, and red rain deluged the field; in vain the foot, like swollen billows crested with glittering icicles, dashed in surfy foam upon the dark barriers, and swept back like mountain waves, beaten down by mighty avalanche hurled to oppose their force, the lances crashed and shivered as upon wall of iron, while bearing down all that barred its course, the tide of pikes swept on. At length, after an hour's stern brunt of conflict, Gerald Byrne, chief in command, observed the lines of the enemy drifting in broken array, and shouted:

"Press on!—bear down! Hurrah, *Faugh a ballagh!* Brave hearts! They scatter—they fly! Charge, Miles, charge and pursue!"

Thrown into utter confusion by the fresh and desperate onset, and unable longer to withstand the shock of Milesian arms, again the British cavalry, leaving the infantry corps to make the best way they could through the storm, fled in disordered route from the avenging pursuer's spear, leaving the field strewn with slain,* and the royal standard of Britain trampled beneath the foe's feet, while, laden with spoil and provisions, the

* Captains Chamney and Nixon were slain in this engagement.

victors pursued their way towards Wicklow Gap, where they pitched their camp.

Elate with pardonable exultation in the unvarying success of their arms, and priding in the prowess of the heroes, whose hands had not only stemmed the torrent of the oppressor's might, but even turned the tide of blood and warfare to inundate his own path, Miles O'Byrne, with lifted brow beaming high hope and lofty aspirations, till now but vaguely dreamed of, with the lordly mien and stride of one who felt the sod he pressed was his own once more, walked beside Percy Esmond, proportionably crestfallen, and wondering in his secret soul what blight had fallen upon and withered the sap of valour and might in British arms. Less sarcastic of spirit, he calmly heard the victor rhapsodise upon a futurity he now owned, in silence, might not be quite a chimerical vision of Utopian fancy, and less confidently he asserted his creed in the fallacy of that of his adversary, while he expatriated in glowing language upon the theme of many hearts, "Ireland for the Irish"—a regenerated land wherein, beneath the protecting ægis of equal law and kindly cherished human sympathies, the foeman abjuring strife, and the stranger claiming an asylum, might dwell together in brotherly love and harmony. As they walked along the green winding footpaths, moist with new-fallen rain, and the heavy brooding skies hanging gray and gloomy overhead, the cheek of Miles betimes grew sad and his voice deep and pathetic, as he reverted in thought to him who had led them thus far up the toilsome ascent to the eminence whereon they now stood—the country's avengers, the foeman's dread. Gallant Father John! how many tears should yet in days to come dim the eye at thought of him so cruelly snatched away and consigned to a martyr's grave? But truce for the present in this crisis of fate. With all unnerving sorrow, let the dead be embalmed in the precious fragrance of the fond heart's memory, till the hour when the consecrated names shall be anointed with chrism of glory, their names inscribed in gold in imperishable record, and incense of praise, with tribute of tears, be offered to the sanctified dust, shrined in monument of

marble. Miles turned abruptly to beckon to Hugh and Ned Burke, whom he spied in the distance, and while they were approaching, Euphemia and Nelly, heated and breathless with running, came up from an opposite direction, Euphemia exclaiming:

"Miles, we've found it;—come along; Kitty is waiting at the other side of the hedge."

"Found what?" cried Miles, testily, and reddening in spite of his stoicism at the figure she presented before Percy, whose mind's eye must have contrasted, he thought, her *tout ensemble* rather disparagingly with that other fair picture, no doubt, at this moment, present to it—Florence Esmond, in her refined beauty and cultured grace. "I really wish, Effie, you would not be so wild. What have you found?"

"I say, Miles, you got out of bed at the wrong side this morning," pertly returned the unabashed gipsy, with a saucy smile, tossing back the tangled mass of her raven hair. "I thought you wanted to see Meelan Conroy: if you don't, it's no matter! Come along, Nelly! If you want to see the old castle, Ned, follow us; and be sure you give a loud trumpet-call, Hugh, if the camp rises, that we may be in time to follow you."

Away she sped, with a merry glance at Percy Esmond, who smiled in turn, amused, but deeming her a very Hot-tentot. Miles, whose fortitude, when summoned to his aid, enabled him at all times to bear the inevitable with as good grace, even though he felt the keen sting of Percy's ridicule of the ludicrous, said good-humouredly:

"Come, let's follow. Miss Effie, broken loose from school, has it all her own way now; but when we have come to the end of this roving camp-life, my little lady shall find her wings clipped, and her liberty circumscribed within the bounds of decorum and training, till she presents a different aspect!"

"That will be no easy matter, I infer," said Percy, maliciously. "If it be true, as we are told, that first impressions are ineffaceable—what is in the blood will abide to eternity, defying art and time to eradicate. The gipsies, for instance, who has ever heard of one of the tribe being

reclaimed to the usages of civilised life? And for my part, wandering through scenes like these, I am free to confess that, had my lot been cast among the Bohemians, not all the blandishments of courts would have lured me from the enjoyment of my wild liberty to a gilded cage!"

Miles, not over-pleased at this speech, was about to reply in tone somewhat haughtily, when Hugh, pointing to what looked like a heap of manure, piled up against an old wall, not far distant, and in sight of the broken turrets of an ivy-screened castle, said:

"I do believe, Miles, yonder green hillock is the abode of some class of beings. Ned, if he had not run on with the children, would fain insist it was a fairy rath; for I certainly saw awhile ago a very small object in human form creep out and creep in again. Just let's take a look in as we go by."

Diverging slightly from their path, the three gentlemen walked in the direction of the rank mound of matted grass and rotten straw, which, before they reached, they were again overtaken by Effie and her train, this time including Ned and his mother, to say they need not take the trouble to come on further, for they had searched the castle, and found that Meelan and the child were gone away; it was quite empty, and, as they said the word, from an aperture in the heap they were now near enough to discover to be a hut, without chimney or casement, protruded a face which had well become a worthier frame, and they recognised Meelan Conroy.

"Musha, thin, ye crathur, is it here ye are, an' we afther lookin' for ye up in the ould castle beyant, an' findin' not a relict of ye in it!" exclaimed Kitty, anticipating the others as, without ceremony, she bent her short person and dived into the dark den, while Hugh and Miles, stooping almost to their knees, found their way after, followed by Ned, Effie, and Nelly. Esmond preferred to stand outside at the door, listening to the twitter of birds among the drooping trees, and wishing in his heart himself far away from the rural scene of green fields, blue hills, and silver streams, in the busy thoroughfares of the more congenial smoke and din and charm of the metropolis.

"Troth, an' it's myself is glad to see ye, alanna! An'

how's the weeny one?" continued Kitty, addressing the young woman, who stood with the child in her arms, clasping her neck, and resting its head upon her cheek, while its large transparent eyes rested solemnly upon all at the same moment. "Why, it's dwindled away to a thread the crathur is. What ails it?"

"Why did you leave the castle, Meelan? I should have thought you would have been more comfortable there," said Miles, gazing upon the attenuated forms of mother and child, and around the dark enclosure wherein they stood, whose sole furniture was one three-legged stool, with a bundle of heath in a corner. Meelan looked bewildered at the questioner, her lips parted as if in the act to speak, and she stood silent then, as one lost in reverie, while the sharp eyes of Euphemia and Nelly eagerly scanned her countenance. After that lingering pause of thought, Meelan murmured slowly, just above her breath:

"I shouldn't have gone there. When the seal of desolation is set upon a ruin no hand should break it or invade the secrets locked within its dark recesses."

"Wasn't it haunted, Meelan?" cried Euphemia, impatient and eager for corroboration of her own belief by the testimony of another; but, without heeding the interruption, she mused on:

"Let no man think to rekindle a quenched hearth-fire among ruins. The dead are jealous of the walls reared by their hands, and brook not profanation of the shrine wherein once they toiled in joy and sorrow in the flesh, derelict and abandoned by their race. Is it not written, 'So be it?' Why should the foot of stranger invade their peace, or the eye of stranger look upon their penance, or the voice of stranger mingle with the sigh of spirits within the consecrated precincts of expiation in solitude and silence? I should not have gone there."

"Well, well, you're out of it now, so think no more about it," said Hugh, striving to combat an emotion of intense awe by assuring himself that the woman was certainly crazed; while, shuddering, Kitty observed, as a gleam of light shone upon the obscurity:

"Glory be to God, it's goin' to take up fine—the sun's risin'."

"No, it isn't the sun," piped the tiny voice of the child, sweet and musical, as if a silver chord of a *clearseach* vibrated. "It was an angel went past—a bright, bright angel from a great way off, going home to his own star;" and the child, with languid motion, raised itself up, and, with outstretched hands, gazed with straining orbs as though far beyond the mud walls of the hovel and the gray curtain of the sky it beheld entranced the golden gates of the West flung open, and through a spanless vista of rainbow-arches and banners of purple and crimson the beatified vision pass into the white light of heaven.

For an instant, awestruck, the auditors held bated breath, gazing mutely on the mother and child, whose strange aspect and speech stirred a new pulse in each bosom. Then Miles said, taking the small hand of the child in his:

"Poor little one!" Addressing the mother, he continued: "How do you obtain a livelihood? What supports you?"

Meelan articulated in tone low and musing:

"I don't know—a little does it; for three days we had no bread, and then one evening at sunset a lady came to the door and handed us in a cake of white bread. We have lived on it since, and, use what we may, it leaves abundant yet!"

"Only I fear you are not strong enough, with this fragile creature, to bear the toil of long and often hurried march, in which full often scores of delicate women and children have fallen without possibility of succour," said Miles, "I would ask you to come to our camp, where, in some respects, you might be more comfortable."

Here the child interposed, with voice of energy: "No, don't go, ma'am; *athair* is comin', an' we'll be soon goin' home now. Ma'am, wash my hands an' my face; I must go nice an' clean to-night to God."

A thrill crept through every bosom; but the mother, pressing the child to her heart, murmured: "Will you go, my soul's treasure, an' leave me all alone in this cold world?"

"Oh, ma'am, I must go; they want me; and I'll come

again beautiful to you in a dress of woven sunbeams, and I'll bring you flowers—oh, such lovely flowers!—but I must go, they call me."

The child lay back exhausted and weary on its mother's arm, and all who looked upon the small face, sublimated, spiritualised, and in its deadly pallor lustrous with the celestial beam pervading every feature, like light shining through a semi-opaque vase—all felt that the luminous spirit was indeed hovering on the threshold of its earthly shrine, and pluming its pinion for flight into another world.

"Sit down, my poor woman," said Miles. "We have inconsiderately kept you standing too long. I shall hasten to our camp and send you speedily some assistance in food, clothing, and whatever we can spare. Is there anything you especially wish for?"

"God bless you! God bless you!" fervently ejaculated Meelan, bending, with tearful eyes, over her child. "I'd like to see the priest, to have him lay his hand upon my weeny one. I'd like to see Father John."

"No, ma'am, not him," gasped the child. "He's gone with the angels, an' can't come now. Oh, ma'am, I wish you could see him, sitting between Patrick and Mary, and angels upon angels—oh, millions!—crowding round him, and the Saviour looking down from a blazing throne and smiling on them all. Ah! when will *athair* come? I want to go."

"Poor child! yours are happy visions. Pray for us when you get to your happy home," said Miles, going out, followed by the others.

"For heaven's sake, what charm detained you so long in that filthy den?" exclaimed Percy Emonds, in peevish, querulous tone, accosting him as he appeared. "I'm sure I don't know what attraction there can be in the squalid inmates or their mud hovel."

Miles returned, gravely: "Not much, perhaps, to you or me, of the earth earthly; but, believe me, Percy, the flesh is not the man, nor does the tenement limit the vision of his soul. To the squalid inmates clothed in temporary rags are given hopes and aspirations that the

spacious universe cannot bound, and dreams and vistas of glory such as the Cæsars in their purple never contemplated, and of which bereft they would not exchange their mud hovel to dwell in the palace of kings. Speed on; the rain is falling, and I've promised to send the poor woman some assistance from the camp for her dying child."

Percy Esmond was not by nature heartless or hardened, but he had been trained in a school in which lessons of human wisdom, philosophy, and self-seeking were assiduously cultivated, to the utter exclusion of divine precepts, inculcating self-abnegation, simple faith, and human charity. So, gifted with a tolerably hard head, and rather proud of an exemplary fund of hard, practical common-sense, that sternly excluded from heart and brain all foolish claptrap play of sentiment or imagination, he walked beside Miles, judiciously silent, and thinking within his own mind: "Silly fellow! what a donkey he must be—yet not a bit of a fool in some things, only quite cracked on his hobby, dazed by the glamour of witchcraft—I mean priestcraft—'tis all one. Humph!"

They reached the camp, and Miles having told the story of Meelan Conroy, baskets with food and clothing were soon packed, to be conveyed by Kitty to the hut, while Father Kerns snatched an hour from business to accompany her to afford the benefit of his sacred ministry to the poor woman and her child.

Meanwhile night had closed in, and whither was Miles wending, wrapped in sable mantle? Upon the walls of that ruined castle, upon which his eyes had rested while Meelan's mystic words had evoked a sudden interest, and stirred up a dormant spirit yearning for adventure, and deep thoughts of possible things, not unallied to the supernatural, in whose creed he was no sceptic. Again he had gazed with eye intent, and absorbed in profound rumination. Hugh stood beside him, contemplating the same object with equal curiosity, and impressed with feeling not less deep. Miles spoke, addressing him:

"Had the woman simply said out her tale, we might have construed it according to our judgment. I am not for believing ghost stories, any more than fairy tales,

knowing well what tricks imagination can play upon credulity, ignorance, and timidity, but she veiled her subject in such mysterious phrase that somehow it laid more hold of my mind than any more direct statement would have done. I'll tell you what Hugh, I'll pass to-night in that castle."

"Do you think it wise to go alone?" demanded Hugh, "Neither you nor I can doubt of each other's courage where man meets man in mortal mould, but are you sure your nerves would be proof against supernatural challenge or what superstitious fear might dupe one into believing such?"

Miles thoughtfully answered: "I am not a man of weak nerve. Let Ned come and light a fire in such chamber as I shall choose, with a pair of pistols, a book, and a lamp: the time will pass lightly till dawn."

"I'll tell you what Miles," said Hugh, "I don't like the idea of your going alone, the castle* is large enough in space to afford more than one recess within its ruins; I will take up my quarters, similarly provided for the night, in some spot of it; then, should either of us be victimised to jugglers' tricks or nocturnal visitation, a pistol report will speedily summon to the call."

"Agreed," said Miles. "Call Ned to fetch turf and candles, and follow me."

* In the vicinity of the Poul-a-phuca, or Demon's Hole, the roar of whose mighty whirlpool was heard where they stood.

CHAPTER XL.

THE SPECTRE OF THE RUIN.

"The spiritual world
Lies all about us, and its avenues
Are open to the unseen feet of phantoms
That come and go, and we perceive them not
Save by their influence, or when at times
A most mysterious Providence permits them
To manifest themselves to mortal eyes."

"GILES COREY OF SALEM FARM."

"Such scenes have been th' abodes
Where through the silence of my soul have passed
Voices and visions from the sphere of those
That have to die no more."

"VESPERS OF PALERMO."

IRELAND is a land whose mystic story may be clearly read though dimly interpreted in the ruined mementoes that strew her hills and valleys from shore to shore. The modern structures of the Norman and the Dane bear inscribed upon their front the date of their foundation, and subsequent vicissitudes; the monastic fanes and hoary castles of yet earlier centuries speak of the time when Milesian monarchs reigned in Tara, Emania, and Kincorah; when St. Patrick first preached Christianity to assembled princes and astounded Druids, met in conclave upon the royal hill, where we behold each imposing figure of the majestic group looming in the foreground of the scene through the mist of fifteen hundred years. In Ulster, O'Neils, O'Donnells, and MacMahons can point to the gray remnants of their ancestral halls; in Munster, O'Sullivans, O'Driscolls, O'Briens, M'Carthys, may yet look upon the devastated homes of their fathers; in Connaught, MacDermods and O'Connors; and in Leinster O'Ruarc's, O'Ferralls, O'Byrnes, O'Mores, and O'Cavanagha

can retrace the site of former glory in the princely piles now abandoned to decay, where once dwelt the long line of their chivalrous sires in fame and pride. But there are, isolated and few, dispersed among these records of time, fanes of whom legend or tradition has no chronicle, upon whose mural tablets of rough unhewn stone, piled in huge boulders, and held together by the interlacing and clasping ivy that clothes their naked skeleton, no inscription in Ogham, Runic, or hieroglyphics tells of their prehistoric birth in the early age of time : like the towers of mystery they stand alone, dumb oracles, whose sealed lips give no answer and disclose no secret, and baffled posterity, unenlightened, passes farther and farther down the stream to the gulf of oblivion.

It was towards one of such dateless fanes that Miles O'Byrne directed his steps, and entering a low-browed portal draped with wild briars, which he crushed aside, stumbling over disjointed stones through which grew rank tufts of verdure, he groped his way up a dilapidated stone stairs, so steep and narrow as to present a dangerous footing to any unused to scale giddy heights, or tread with firm step a precipitous ledge on mountain brow. Carefully he passed along holding by projecting angles of the wall, slimy with mildew, now gaining a small landing, from whence he diverged to explore on his right hand a low, dark, mural chamber, through whose broken loopholes and creviced walls the wind wailed dismally, and an owl, disturbed from its repose by the steps of the intruder, made a rustling noise as it flapped its wings among the branches that festooned a gaping fissure, and uttering a mournful note, peering into the gloom it looked at Miles, as his fancy deemed, with an almost human face, and an expression of human soul in its fixed, large, sad eyes. Miles did not loiter in this weird recess. He withdrew, and, passing another flight of broken and toppling stone steps, soaring into utter darkness, he entered the dimly-lighted chamber to his left. The floor, uneven and broken, showed it had once been tiled with bricks of ancient construction ; but crumbling walls of massive girth and shattered loopholes, once meant, no doubt, to admit light

and air, presented no inviting aspect to woo his stay, even had the impending blocks of rifted ceiling admitting vistas of the sky, and looking dangerously prone to swift descent, had not warned him forth. Then up the dark flight of steps he trod, till turning an angle, he stepped upon a second landing, and amid mural passages and flights of other steps, irregular and unconnected, and rude cells and recesses promiscuously scattered, and evidently constructed and planned in the primitive days of architectural design, he selected one larger in dimension, and in less ruined condition than any he had yet seen. Surveying it around, in an antique fireplace, devoid of grate, he noticed the remains of charred embers of wood and turf upon the hearth, and at once conjecturing this had been the apartment occupied by Meelan, he decided to appropriate it for the night, leaving Hugh to select any one of the nooks or crannies he might choose from among those on the same landing, and patiently awaited his arrival. Soon after, with Ned, laden each with materials for fire and provisions, to while away the tedious hours of the night-watch, Hugh selected his post, and soon bright fires, blazing cheerily through the dark recesses, flung an umbered radiance upon the brown walls, upon which the shadow of Miles flickered in grotesque form, as, having dismissed Ned, dismayed and wondering, and parted with Hugh, he sat still, wrapped in his mantle, book in hand, upon a block of wood laid on a stone, and beside him a lamp burning upon a jutting fragment of the fireplace.

Hugh's last word at leaving had been, with a laugh : "Methinks we shall have barren result to reward our pains, and if it get rumoured, this freak of ours, in the camp there will be no end to the fun. We'll surely be ridiculed as ghost-hunters. I'm sorry we've embarked in such silly emprise."

"Pooh! let them laugh and pass on," returned Miles. "At least they won't question our courage, for not a man of them would venture as much ;—albeit I agree with you, we shall simply prove that Meelan Conroy and Effie are the dupes of fevered fancy, from which even stronger minds

might not be quite exempt within such sinister-looking abode. Good-night."

Miles opened his book. It was a volume of the "Spectator," which for awhile he perused with attentive interest; but by-and-by the pages ceased to turn, and eyes fixed dreamily upon the glowing faggots showed his thoughts abstracted and wandering far away to other themes. The silence around was intense, but for the moaning and sighing of the wind through the rifted ruin, and moments there were when he lifted his head and looked forward as though he had heard voices on the blast as it swept along. But, no; betimes an owl shrieked, startling him with sudden thrill; but all was hushed again. He took out his watch: the hands pointed to half-past one o'clock, another hour would see the dawn. He stirred and replenished the fire, for he began to feel a cold chill creeping through his blood, and with it came a feeling he vainly strove to combat—a sense of awe akin to horror, which he could not shake off, permeated his bosom. Involuntarily, too, his limbs began to shake with a tremor he could not control; a damp perspiration broke out upon his brow, his palate and tongue seemed to grow parched and dry, his hands felt numb, and concluding that long, toilsome marches, exposure to weather, privation in a thousand forms, had done their work, and that malady had seized upon his frame, he was thinking what he had best do, when, casting his eyes upward, he recoiled aghast at sight of a shadow, indistinct but palpable, moving in the space between him and the doorway. Powerless to think, to speak, to stir, he continued to gaze till every sense seemed paralysed in cold apathy, while, as though wrought by dioramic agency, the formless thing deepened into shape and outline till it embodied the semblance of a human form, proportioned beyond the average of ordinary men, and Miles, no longer cognisant of any particular emotion, gazed calm and steadfast upon the apparition of a man of proud bearing, stricken in years, and clothed in garb at once foreign and of most antique fashion. Jewelled sandals with buckles of gold adorned his feet; a sleeveless tunic of white, rough-spun wool, wrought with golden

threads, was looped upon his broad shoulders with studs of gold, and bound round his middle with a girdle of precious stones. His large, bare, sinewy arms and legs were encircled with bands and anklets of pure gold; in one hand he held a bronze spear set in golden socket, in the other he held a scroll traced with Ogham characters. The features were shapely and stamped with character, but it was the eye, fraught with gloomy light, and expression unlike anything he had ever seen, that riveted his absorbed attention, and under whose mysterious gleam he felt his whole being magnetised, as it were in trance. Mechanically, however, as thought began to stir, and mind to react, he drew forth a crucifix, signed himself, and in accents nervous and impetuous challenged the strange apparition :

“Weird being, what art thou?”

A dull sound, like a hollow murmur, fell upon his ear, then shaped itself in words :

“Son of the Gael, wherefore dost thou molest me? When the world came forth, renewed and fresh from the waters of the deluge, mine was the foot of all the children of Noah that first made its print on the green sward of this land. I was then swathed in flesh as thou art now. King of men I was, and to my sons after me I bequeathed the soil mine was the first hand to possess. With fleet-limbed hounds we chased the red deer over the hills, and from the blue clouds our silver arrows brought the bold eagle to our feet. Is it no small matter that, Esau-like, we have been thrust forth from our possession and our birth-right made over to ye of the favoured younger race of the patriarch; but that the groves and the high places of them whose voices first waked the echoes of the solitary shore, Partholan and Nemid, and the children of the Firbolg and the Tuatha de Danaan, ye have blotted out, but ye must yet invade the sepulchre of our bones? And reckest thou not of them that will avenge the elder-born outcast?—ay, will thwart ye with stripe and bruise, will strew for ye the fields with thorns, and make ye drink of the water of bitterness. In the long strife we shall wage to ye will victory be given, but it will be the victory

of him who sinks weary to rest for aye upon the body of his slain foe, and when his hand shall wrestle no more for earthly prize, when his bones shall crumble into dust of Innisfail, or lie, as shall thine, scattered afar beneath the flowers of another land, not until then shall ye be gathered as the sunbeams into sheaves, not until then shall be your guerdon the crown of the victor."

The spectral voice died away, but Miles, actuated by some impulse which he could not control, cried aloud: "Fell spirit, since 'tis to the malign influence of the demon we are persecuted well nigh to extermination in this our Isle of Destiny, how is it that for more than ten centuries ye strove not against us while our Druid monarchs reigned, and their posterity lighted for the one true God the shrine and the temple, whose beams, shining out, illumined the darkness of the surrounding world?"

"Am I in the councils of the Mighty One who smote in his wrath the Idols of Babylon, and let pass a day the Magian altars of the Western Isle. Happily his hand spared the pagan sires for sake of the Christian sons who would yet offer sacrifice to Him from the rising to the going down of the sun; but now a day is given us, and we hasten to gather the nations. To our loud summons in the storm, to our voice in the roar of waters they come, from the bleak shores of northern climes, from drear swamps and forest wastes sullen children of them that worshipped Woden, Thor, and Friga, and lo! palace, shrine, and temple, archive and trophy, where are they? Children of adoption!—ha, ha, ha!—favourites of heaven, soaking in their blood their Innisfail, in sooth a barren heritage, our scoff and derision. What more wouldst thou? Shall I, obedient to thy mandate, open the secrets of the antediluvian world—some lie beneath thy feet—or unfold the page of the future day?"

The voice ceased, and in the pause that ensued Miles felt the cold tremor again shaking his heart.

"Begone!" he abruptly cried. "I seek not to question thee of the mysteries veiled by the Omnipotent Creator and Lord of all."

"Wherefore camest thou," demanded the phantom, "to pry into mine?"

"I know thee not; nor can I divine the mysterious impulse that led me hither: a whispered breath of some ghostly thing haunting these ruins stirred in my bosom a sudden yearning to satisfy my own senses. It is enough; begone!"

"Farewell!" sighed the phantom. "I go, son of the Milesian, at thy word, which hath power over us thy brethren of elder time. Child of the Nazarene, who loved so well thy race, He deemed it well ransomed with his blood. Not for this I came; but, with his sign upon thy brow and his chrism on thy breast, invulnerable to the breath and the touch that should wither thee as a parchment in the oven, I leave thee unscathed; and never shall we two meet again till the Archangel's trumpet has sounded for the waking, and Adam's scattered children meet for judgment and partition; then thou shalt again behold me in the flesh and know me."

As the hollow voice ceased, a confused murmur of sound, as of water, wind, and flame struggling together, commingled with smothered voices, fell upon the ear of the cold listener, whose heart beat low and faint; even as he gazed, the phantom disappeared as a wreath of vapour dispersed in air. Heavy shadows seemed to float in the gloom; for a moment Miles, petrified and inert, gazed vacantly before him, inwardly questioning, "Is it all a dream, or has my mind, fevered by distemper, conjured up a spectral illusion to fool my senses?" He glanced at the fire, and at the lamp dimly lighting the grim recess. Something stirred and fluttered overhead; nervously his eye turned in the direction. An owl, perched on a broken boulder of rock, looked him steadily in the face with a strange, supernatural glare, as he thought, in its elfish-fixed blue eyes. Hastily he seized the lamp, and hurried to where Hugh lay stretched at full length before the dying embers of a turf fire, smouldering where once might have been a hearth. He shook him;—for the sleeper was tossing his arms and groaning heavily. Up started the

recumbent form and stared wildly round; then, seeing Miles, he said, with sigh of relief:

"Glad you waked me: I've had an ugly dream. Me-thought I stood with our men on a hill, drawn out for battle. A priest, in black vestments, was saying Mass over an open grave, around which many people were weeping, when, lo! we were surrounded by soldiers. We lifted our pikes to defend, but found they were all reeds in our hands. Then we heard the voice of the commanding officer cry out: 'Lay down your arms, and take quarter.' We did so. Then from a battalion of levelled muskets sped a shower of red bullets: one pierced my heart, and struggling in the agony of death pangs I was when you woke me."

"Get up, and let's go forth to the camp with speed," said Miles, with unsteady voice. "Breathe no word of what I tell you, and question me not till time and reflection may compose my spirit to calm retrospect and self-possessed narrative. This place is haunted!"

Up sprang Hugh without delay, pulled his cap over his brow, shouldered his pike, felt his pistols safe in the breast-pocket of his *cotamore*, and said, courtly: "Get on."

Out in the fresh open air, watching the night clouds furling away, and golden streaks of day shimmering in the East, Miles turned and gazed, like one spellbound, upon the weird, gray walls of the mysterious ruin of former time. So long he stood entranced, reviewing in thought the supernatural event which he had witnessed, and whose keen impression lingered in every nerve and permeated every sense, yet, now that it had passed away, left him questioning his own mind whether he had not been the fevered victim of a frenzied fancy. that the sun shone out in all its splendour, and Hugh, impatient, walked on. Then Miles, turning away, said within himself: "Fancy or necromancy, it was a strange vision; and again will I explore yon precincts, though in the open noontide, for much I question would my courage brook another such nocturnal venture, of a surety not the creation of disturbed or disordered mind, as incredulous reason would fain persuade me now."

He hastened after Hugh, stalking on before, and spying the cottage of Meelan Conroy in the distance, he thought he would just knock at the door and ask for the child. Rich with promise of a brilliant day rose that bright, pure morning; and in the fresh beauty of the waking world, besprent with the sparkling dewdrops of the night, a vague sensation of delicious rapture, like some balmy unction, infused itself with every inspiration of the redolent breeze into the soul of Miles, chasing every brooding cloud away, and leaving it serene and fair as the expanse of magic blue in the overarching firmament. His bosom heaving with a tumult of emotions he could not define, save in the exquisite perception of mind attuned to poetic harmony, with the music of nature floating all around him, he knocked gently at the door of the hut, which was ajar, and Meelan came out, with her dead child in her arms. Miles gazed in reverential silence a moment upon the wax-like image, smiling in its sleep of everlasting repose, and compassionately addressing the quiet, tearless mother said:

"Gone home into the glory of the golden heaven; shaken from its silver wings the tears of earth, the light and the incense and music of the morn upon its path, your child has well exchanged."

"It was hard to part from all I had," murmured the woman, with quivering sigh; "but God's will be done."

"Yes," said Miles, "'tis hard for them that hunger to cast into the dark furrow the grain and the seed they would live upon in the present; but when the time of the golden harvest and fruit and flowers returns, will they not be glad and rejoice for the sacrifice repaid a hundredfold? So shall it be, when this seedling we deposit beneath the sod, where the flower shall deck the green grass, the hand of the worker beneath will be reconstructing a fairer flower for future revelation. Lay down the little one upon this mossy bank, and sit and rest, while I send Kitty and Ned to help you from the camp."

Miles went his way, and the child of Meelan Conroy was laid upon the soft verdure, amid a wealth of summer

flowers, breathing perfume round her; wild roses and woodbine, waving above, shook down from every spray a shower of crystal drops, and a lark singing wild and high in the exuberance of rapture, like the chiming of silver bells, was heard, though not seen, in the dazzling ether, while Meelan said, looking up, with melancholy smile tinging her wan cheek :

"What if that were the voice of my child? Indeed I've a strange notion it is. She promised to come back to me with flowers. I will wait in patience, with God's help and that of his Blessed Mother, and in His good time I shall go to Him, and see my child again!"

Miles and Hugh arriving at the camp found it in a state of commotion, and displaying tokens of much exhilaration: groups of men were laughing and speaking in loud tones of pleasurable excitement, while women, scattered here and there through the mass, equally joyous, were bustling about, serving round victuals to the men and cooking over turf and bramble fires that sent clouds of blue smoke curling aloft on the light wings of the morning breeze. As they came in sight, Ned, who was on the look-out, came to meet them with the intelligence that Dwyer and his men had just come in after blowing up one of the newly-built barracks, of which five had been lately erected at Glencree, Lough, Drumgoff, Leitrim, and Aughavanah, to shut up the mountain passes, and hem-in the insurgent chief of Wicklow in his strong fastness of the Glen of Imale, that of Glenmalure destined to command the whole neighbouring district, and now nearly complete for military occupation, being most formidable, and calculated to circumscribe the action of the insurgents, so that, cut off from all supplies, they must starve in the glen or surrender at discretion. Dwyer determined to sweep them from his path, and with him to resolve was to achieve. His plans were formed, the train laid, the fortress was demolished, and he rode in triumph to Ballyraken, in time to fall in with another detachment led by Gerald Byrne and some others, just returned at hunting speed from having accomplished the feat of burning the English camp at Wicklow gold mines. Elated

by these oheery tidings, Hugh passed on to meet the chiefs, while Miles lingered a moment to bid Ned go with his mother down to Meelan Conroy's, and after having prevailed upon her to let the deceased child be buried without delay, to induce her to accompany them back to the camp, till they might, on their next march, leave her in some safe neighbourhood. Ned had hardly sped on his mission, and Miles proceeded to greet Dwyer and Gerald, and learn from Father Kerns their next programme of action, when scouts arrived, breathless, with intelligence of a formidable English force advancing upon their position. On receipt of these tidings orders were at once issued for the insurgent troops to march to one of the hills in their vicinity, to take up a more favourable position; and as at the head of his column Miles passed by the scene of his last night's adventure, the sudden rebound of his spirit from a sort of reckless hilarity altogether foreign to his nature, and partaking something of the feeling of one labouring under the effect of intoxicating stimulant, and which could only be ascribed to reaction of the nervous system, disturbed from its equilibrium by unwonted shock, to a sense of chill dismay, assured him that he had been the sport of no deceptive illusion. He would have gladly now eased his mind by unburdening it of its secret to Hugh; but Hugh rode in another division, beside Gerald Byrne, and so, constrained to brood in silent cogitation, his band filed on, amid a dense fog, which, rising, blotted out the sun and covered all the surrounding country, while volleys of artillery, booming along the muffled atmosphere, announced the near approach of the foe. By-and-by, however, the fog dispersed, and the sun, shining out in all its brilliancy, revealed a large English force of horse, foot, and artillery following in their rear, about the distance of a mile, commanded by Sir James Duff, and advancing at slow pace along the Gorey road, in expectation of being reinforced by General Needham. Leaving the high-road, the insurgents proceeded by a narrow cross-road, to meet them, stationing their gunsmen, in obedience to orders, in ambush behind the fences, while the main body moved steadily on, as if intending to pursue their march to

Ballygullen, thus designing by this movement to draw the enemy's cavalry, who had not seen the execution of the stratagem, and were unaware of the position of the ambushed gunsmen. The *ruse* succeeded. The cavalry permitting the main body of the pikemen to file along, followed them at cautious distance; but when they came within reach, the concealed marksmen, too impatient of engagement, prematurely opened a close and destructive fire upon the advancing squadron, which at once tumbled and fled, with loss so heavy that they were unable to take part in the engagement that ensued. General Duff, on beholding the surprise and defeat of his cavalry, ordered the infantry to deploy into line and advance. Hitherto Miles O'Byrne, still under the spell of mystic influence, fascinated, as it were, in contemplation of the haunting spectre that had vanished but to reappear to the mental eye with persistent obstinacy, recalling the subtle eye that, glaring on him, had rolled and burned red and fierce in its cavernous socket as that of Numidian lion tracking its prey along the arid sands of the desert, and the drear wreck of a once human habitation, with the scent of death permeating its sepulchral chambers, and its broken walls shrouded in funereal drapery of moss and ivy, and the blood-thrilling words that had echoed within its gloom, and electrified his soul with horror: under the influence of all this, Miles, in a state that resembled torpor, moved along, and had mechanically responded to the observance of each routine of action. It seemed as though his spirit was no longer in a cause a solemn warning had ominously presaged would be vain and fruitless. But at the heart-shaking trumpet sounds, and fired by the talismanic cry, "Charge!" the weird phantom flies and dark bodings are silent. The storm bursts, and down comes the red rain!—the war music is drowned in the battle-roar, and thought is merged in action. Anon, broken swords, dragged plumes, and pikes and bayonets strew the field amid ridges of the slain. Conflict more fierce or sanguinary never raged. The insurgents maintained a deadly fusillade upon the English ranks till their ammunition was spent, and then the pikemen thundered down upon the

shaking lines of the foe, upon which General Duff, after an engagement of two hours, sounded a retreat. But report of overwhelming reinforcements of the combined English army coming up from Wexford being conveyed by their scouts to the insurgent camp, in a hasty council of war it was decided to divide their force, and each division to make way through the host pouring in on all sides, to such point as each leader might deem most suitable in present emergency.

Hugh O'Byrne, having bade adieu to Miles, set out with several detachments under Gerald Byrne and Father Kerns, *en route* for Wexford. Dwyer led off his gallant bands to the shelter of the Wicklow mountains, Miles following in the same direction in the brigade commanded by Roche. The small detachment was surprised and routed after a sharp conflict with a corps of Beresford's Bloodhounds, supported by a squadron of Kildare Militia, and Miles, with several others, was taken prisoner.

"I have made good use of it, and shall never blush for the cause it served," said Miles, as he surrendered his sword to Marmion Esmond.

CHAPTER XLI.

LADY ALICIA GOES AGAIN TO THE LOOM.

"How! is there not
Enough of blood upon your burdened souls?
Will not the visions of your midnight couch
Be wild and dark enough, but ye must heap
Crime upon crime? Be ye content, your dreams,
Your councils, and your banquettings will yet
Be haunted by the voice which does not sleep."

HEMANS.

THAT family traits of mind, as well as of person, run down through long generations, physiologists tell us; and, in many cases, our own knowledge and experience confirm the truth of the observation. In the Luttrell history the theory was exemplified to the letter, commencing with

him of inauspicious *prestige*, who, possessed of the philosophic axiom, that "straight lines to a goal make shortest paths," and having for his the foundation of an opulent and aristocratic house, with mathematical accuracy of calculation having decided that the most direct way to the attainment of his object being from the side of King James and his companions-in-arms in the royalist cause to the camp of the usurper, without further debate with conscience, commanding the impertinent monitor to silence, and casting sentiment to the wind, he made his onward stride, remorseless though the step weighted the balance against his liege sovereign and his chivalrous supporters in the struggle for his dominion, ruthless of a defeated nation's blood, unconcerned of the stigma that should brand henceforth his name, engraved in red type upon the country's annals, and reckless of blighted honour, so that he but grasped his object; so in like manner, after a lapse of some four or five generations, we behold the descendants upon whom his character was stereotyped, faithful transcripts of the copy, calmly conceiving their several projects, and, with indomitable determination to insure success, seizing upon any and every means to secure their end, regardless of result to others, defying conscience and braving risk so that they triumphed. What if millions famished so that they but feasted? What though millions wept, so that they, favourites of fortune, monopolists of heaven, might smile? And, indeed, we must not select them alone for criticism, for they had their facsimilies in almost every member of their grade. A family likeness was discernible through each cognate spirit of the brotherhood that demonstrated their degree of consanguinity to a certainty. Had Castle-reagh, Lord Clare, and others lived in the Stuart dynasty they would, in deference to their interest, as willingly have sold their monarch to William of Orange as to-day they sold their country—at least what they called such by courtesy—to King George for coronet, star and garter.

Lady Alicia Luttrell had, as we have seen, completed to perfection, by the aid of her coadjutors, her clever *mancœuvre* and cruel scheme, to remove from her path

the unconscious rival, whose presence darkened it with shadow ; but, being accomplished in the school of materialism only, she had no idea naturally of a world of supernatural influence permeating this our terrestrial sphere through every pore ; the swift pulsation of the spiritual through every fibre of the globe's great mass ; the heart of Omnipotence and Omiscience throbbing through the work of His hands from pole to pole, from the ocean's depth to the fixed stars, picturing the walls of the universe ; and of the vibrating thrill, the call of spirit to spirit through the halls of God's boundless mansion, as they flash to the mission of directing, guiding, aiding and strengthening, and protecting the frail children of earth. Hence, astounded and enraged at the accidental frustration of her heart's cherished hope, but not for that to be vanquished, again she set herself to fabricate, in the loom of her active brain, new devices and new toils to promote her end. Eyes red with fierce emotion, and hollow with sleepless cogitation, cheek tinted with the green and sickly pallor of bitter, jealous envy and blighted anticipation, she twisted over and over in her tallow-like fingers the letter Colandisk had written, informing her of the failure that had marred their well-concerted plan, and of the arrival of O'Driscoll in Wexford, with all the details of his meeting and gracious reception by Alphonse Fitzpatrick, to whom he did not in the least doubt he would soon stand in the position of accepted suitor, if some new, lucky expedient could not be found to thwart it.

"In fact, my dear friend," wrote the candid Guildford, "adroit as was our management, things have turned out worse than they might, had we left them to take their course. When in Dublin I did not think the heartless flirt evinced any partiality for O'Driscoll or anyone except that brother of hers, and that signified nothing to anyone ; but now, I fear much that they are so thrown together, and the puppy has such opportunity of making himself agreeable, we are in a fix. 'Tis but too evident he is infatuated with the heiress ; so look sharp. What's my forlorn Calypso doing ? Broken her heart yet, eh ? I fear not—divinities are immortal ! Now that we have thrashed the Croppies

out of Wexford, we get on fairly down here. Courtney and the Esmond girl will be going up to town immediately; they take Alphonse with them. . . .

"P.S.—Good news just come in. O'Driscoll is in a fair way to be hanged. Implicated himself in abetting the escape of one of the worst rebels, Hugh O'Byrne. I knew he bragged of doing some such feat, but never thought he'd have had the pluck. Courtney and Esmond are doing their best—meddling fellows!—to get him off. If they succeed, luck goes dead against us; for I hear Alphonse is in tears about the sweet fellow! Adieu! Write soon, and tell me some news.

"Yours, &c.,

"COLANDISK."

"You feather-headed creature!" soliloquised Lady Alicia. "I would write to-day and tell you the news, that old Damer, poor drivelling idiot, yearning to the fosterling he reared and was used to, has taken her back as his house-keeper, and will, in all probability, marry her, or do some insane thing; but that, if he scented a will, it might cause him to relax his mind about Alphonse. And so she will be up in town again in a day or two, all the more *eclectic* for her adventure; and of course O'Driscoll will get lightly out of his dilemma and follow her;—well, let him. One thing I'll do, one step I'll take as a preliminary that shall mar the triumph of the heroine and, perhaps, check his ardour. That priest Fitzpatrick, her brother, whom Don Antonio's munificence and patronage has drawn out of obscurity, so that we see the chrysalis now betimes lifting its head and fluttering in the sunshine among us, is no doubt a United Irishman; nay, I am certain of it. Don't I know lots of people go to confession to him, and among them the kitchenmaid and the cook. I'll question them and send for Major Sirr. If he be convicted, as of course he will, transportation will follow. I wonder then would O'Driscoll's passion demean him to ally with the sister of a felon? We shall see." She rang a bell; the footman answered. "Send up the cook and kitchenmaid." The flunkey disappeared, and a buxom country lass soon stood,

awed and courtesying, on the threshold, before the lady whom she accosted.

"Please, ma'am, mother's gone to market ; but I'll take any directions."

"Come hither, Kate M'Cormack," said Lady Alicia, smiling with gracious sauvity. "You, perhaps, may do as well. You are an intelligent girl, quite above the common, and I intend to promote you very shortly to a higher grade among the servants. There, no thanks ; but tell me, don't you go to confession to that nice young priest, Father Fitzpatrick ?"

"Yes, my lady ; my mother and I go regular every week, turn about."

"Indeed !—that is very good. You are an example to all the servants ; but I wonder, Kate, at the courage of your priest to show himself so frequently in public and he so well known to be a United Irishman !"

"O Lord, ma'am !" exclaimed the frightened girl, "I don't think Father Pat is a United Irishman. My brother Dan goes to him, an' he never speaks a word to him about it—not but that his riverence, God bless him ! is as good a pathriot at heart as the best of 'em."

"Nonsense, girl ! Father Fitzpatrick has too much sense in these troubled times to be a patriot. Yet, I am sorry to say, that won't save him, for so many priests have mixed themselves up with the disaffected people, he is suspected. You ought to tell me in confidence anything you know, that I might interest Lord Carhampton in his favour ; for doubtless the poor young man, if he be guilty, is the dupe of others."

"Oh, dear, my lady !" cried the girl, wildly, "I'm sure he's innocent ; but, as you say, to be suspected is enough. Wouldn't it be well if I ran an' gave Father Pat warnin' to get out of the way ?"

"I think you had best do so," said Lady Alicia, with a smile, knowing that the very act of absconding would fix the onus of guilt upon the victim ; and, as Kate M'Cormack withdrew in haste, after being cautioned not to give her as the source of her information, on account of her position, the lady, changing her plan to send for Major Sirr, wrote,

in a disguised hand, an anonymous letter addressed to that functionary, posted it herself, and awaited the issue, which was that next day, while at luncheon with some friends just dropped in, the news transpired that the night before Don Antonio's nephew, Priest Fitzpatrick, had been arrested in his confessional, by order of Major Sirr, upon some secret information, charging him with complicity in the cause of the United Irishmen and carried off to prison.

"That's a move in the right direction," said Lord Fitzgibbon-Clare, as Claudius Beresford, gloating over his wine and a budget of tidings he was impatient to disgorge, announced the fact. "These priests do incalculable mischief amongst the people, setting them up against lawful authority, and instilling into the vulgar mind extravagant notions of self-importance, to the subversion of all rank and station."

"Fact!" said Lord Carhampton, who, having closed on the £5,000 loan, was disposed to be facetious. "Those priests and Papists are the bane of our peace."

"I know they are very troublesome interlopers in one's domestic concerns, and regular spies into family affairs," sighed Lady Alicia. "I have two Popish servants, and to my face they assert they go, turn about, regularly once a week to the priest—father, forsooth!—Fitzpatrick. Now what can that be for but to keep him *au fait* for the purpose of his Church, and informed of everything that goes on amongst us?"

"I'd put an end to that pretty soon, I can tell you!" exclaimed Claudius Beresford, with a jerk of his head; "that I would."

"As efficiently as you put down the rebellion you longed for, to show how you would quash it in two days," smiled his uncle. "Verily, Claud, you must have discovered by this it measures a good distance from word to deed."

"The Bloodhounds, I can tell you, did their duty," retorted Beresford, somewhat nettled at the sarcasm, "and it is not their fault or mine that the accursed Irishry were not consumed to ashes long since. Methinks they bear a charmed life. But tell me, how is it that, after your own

vaunt a hundred times over, to make the Papists tame as cats, we have them still daring as lions, flouting us to our teeth?"

"Pooh! pooh! I specified no given time for the fulfilment of the pledge," said Lord Clare; "I merely professed my intention, and hope to see it carried out by strenuous exertion before long."

"But those who are zealous in the cause of Sion are so thwarted by those who are lukewarm," murmured Lady Alicia, in die-away tone, "I should not wonder if you failed. I greatly fear Priest Fitzpatrick will be let off through some quibble of law, guilt not proven, or such, in deference to his wealthy relatives—and we know these creatures, Sirr, Sandys, and Swan, are not above a bribe."

"Like to see him get out of my hands, if I laid hold of him," observed Claudius Beresford, sententiously; "at least, if I had no evidence against him," he logically continued, "I'd lash confession out of himself, and that would serve as well."

"You dare not do it, for all your *braggadocio*," sneered Lady Alicia."

"Why not?" returned Claudius, innocently amazed. "What's in him to make him privileged beyond the hundreds, priests among them, too, we sent to the triangle in the Marlborough Riding School?"

"He is a friend of Castlereagh's," said Lady Alicia, with knowing look.

"Tut!" cried Beresford, scornfully; "Castlereagh would not interfere; not to save his father from the block would he act against the weal of the State and his own interest;—a very sensible man is Castlereagh;—and so help me, heaven! as there has been a charge made against this Priest Fitzpatrick by some friend of the Government, *sub rosa*, and as there is no smoke without fire, if he gets out of Sirr's hands, I'll take him in mine, and put him through my own inquisition."

"Take care that isn't within the bounds of the city, where he is known, or we'll have a hornet's nest up," said Lord Carhampton. "The astonishing boldness and success of the rebels in Wicklow and Wexford bodes ill. What

if Dublin and Kildare caught the spark and blazed away? I promise you we'd have enough to do to get with our lives out of the conflagration. What an escape Kingsborough had of being pitchcapped and torn to pieces by the brutal mob!"

"Well, I've better news for you," said Beresford. "Despatches just arrived at the Castle before I came out announced the tidings of the defeat of the rebels, twenty thousand strong, by Lake at Vinegar Hill, and the retreat and pursuit of the enemy by the king's forces. Also from a private letter by courier, from Captain Courtney, I learn that O'Driscoll, the disinherited, has taken a commission in the service, to atone for a naughty freak in behalf of a rebel friend who had been taken prisoner. Shouldn't wonder if the fellow would yet father his own fortune, for he has every qualification to make a demigod, save one—he lacks worldly wisdom, and is of too independent a mind to stoop to court favour; but as I don't profess to patronise such high spirits, I will bestow my present attention upon the Priest Fitzpatrick, who is a chum of his, I believe. Pass the decanter, pray."

While thus the deities throned in high places sat in arbitration upon his fate, and the victim of Lady Alicia's policy lingered in the noisome cells of Newgate pending the pleasure or convenience of men in power, despite the appeals of Don Antonio for public trial, and the memorial of friends to the authorities, nullified by the counteraction of fanatical bigots and designing enemies, the Courtneys, with Florence Esmond and Alphonse Fitzpatrick, arrived in town. Lady Alicia lost no time in calling upon them in their house in Harcourt-street: indeed she was among the very first of their visitors to greet such dear friends. As to the affection she lavished upon Alphonse it was simply overpowering, and only equalled by the secret rapture with which she marked the great change, mental suffering occasioned by her own trouble, and anxious concern for her brother, whose misfortune she had just heard from Don Antonio, who had come over immediately, upon being apprised of her return, to greet her, had wrought upon her appearance; and as coldly courteous and ab-

stracted in manner Alphonse suffered her caresses. Contemplating the pale cheek and the subdued eye of the heretofore sparkling beauty, she smiled to think that the bloom and the beam that had captivated O'Driscoll were there no longer, and that now at least he must be cured of his folly. Again misled by her fallacious creed in the material only, and her false perception of mere outward things, she could not discern that inward charm which, radiating from mind and heart, alone imparts to polished surface, chiselled feature, and tinted complexion the grace of loveliness, independent of every other attraction, and which, after they are fled, still wields an empire over the soul, and fascinates the mind that has discovered it in depth beyond the reach of the microscope.

Unheeding the presence of Lady Alicia, very earnestly Alphonse petitioned Don Antonio, beside whom she sat upon a lounge at a little distance, to take her to Patrick's prison, and very emphatically her uncle, grown within the last two or three weeks much more aged in aspect, replied :

"My dear child, I will not; cease to press it. I will take any message for you to Patrick, to whom I am going now, but it is no place for you to come. I hope he will be soon out of it—indeed I am sure he will—for I have promised my boy I would call on Castlereagh and interest him to grant him an interview. So keep up your spirits; all will end well, and thanking those ladies gratefully—" he bowed to Florence and Ethel—"for their kindness to you, you must not longer intrude upon their convenience."

"Our convenience and pleasure, Don Antonio," said Florence Esmond, with gracious dignity, "is that Miss Fitzpatrick shall remain awhile with us. Aunt Courtney will not hear of her leaving us, and if she were present would unite her entreaties to solicit your acquiescence."

"And then you must come to me, or I shall be so hurt and jealous, dear Alphonse; you must not forget you and I are dear old friends," cried Lady Alicia, in tone of pettish coaxing; "you must, indeed, or I'll never forgive you, dear."

Don Antonio, with paternal benignity smiling upon all the fair disputants, fixed his eyes upon Alphonse, who gently replied :

"Dear Flora, if uncle will kindly permit me to stay a day or two longer with my friends, I should then prefer to go home with him."

"Do just as you please, my dear," said Don Antonio, gravely. "I do not deny I shall be glad of your society, for I have been very lonely in your absence ; yet I would not be so selfish as to require you to sacrifice your own comfort. I know birds of a feather will 'love to flock together,' and age is no congenial associate for youth." He withdrew as he spoke, and Alphonse, turning to Ethel Courtney, said :

"You see I am right : uncle is lonely, and looks badly, too, as though he had fretted much. I will go home to-morrow, and you know we are so near we shall meet each other constantly. I feel it were very ungrateful to leave him."

"You are quite right, dear," simpered Lady Alicia, with a little laugh ; "wealthy old uncles have to be humoured and watched, and the old man certainly does not look so hale as when I last saw him."

Alphonse made no reply, but gazed thoughtfully at the speaker.

Florence Esmond said, pointedly : "In matter of principle and right feeling, I always perceive Miss Fitzpatrick is well directed and firm ; duty is her pole-star, and we must only leave her free to follow it." And as she was yet speaking, the lackey threw open the door to a visitor. It was O'Driscoll !

"My goodness !" exclaimed Ethel Courtney, in astonishment.

"Mr. O'Driscoll, when did you come ?" cried Florence, not knowing what else to say.

"We heard you were become a hero, and got a commission to put down the rebels," jibed Lady Alicia, mortified at beholding Alphonse's pallid cheek flush radiant, and a beam of light flash into her eye at sight of Maurice, who gaily replied, as, without the smallest ceremony, passing

all others by, he seized and warmly shook her coyly-tendered hand :

"So I had, but was taken prisoner by the rebels, and made my escape ; rode hard for my life, and got up to town just an hour ago, ran over to see my mother, who told me of your arrival the day before yesterday, and here I am to bid you *cead mille failthe*. How are you all ?" The question applied to all was addressed to Alphonse, who, conscious of his eager gaze and the scrutinising eyes of each turned upon her, stammered, confused and embarrassed :

"I believe we are all well—but—but—" it gushed from her lips with a great sob—"poor Patrick is in prison !"

"What for ? There, don't weep ;—just tell me, and I'll be off to him, the dear old fellow ! Did he murder anyone of consequence ?"

"Don't make a fool of yourself, Maurice, because Miss Fitzpatrick happens to be hysterical," frowned Lady Alicia. "He is only in prison on some idle charge of being a United Irishman, which, of course, he will disprove and get off. Are you going so soon ?"

"Yes," said O'Driscoll, "I'll go over, and see what can be done. No joke to be thought a United Irishman now, I can tell you."

"Oh ! thank, 'thank you, Maurice, I am so grateful to you. I think you will meet uncle there," said Alphonse, wiping her eyes. "He is just gone from this."

"So much the better : two heads are better than one. Where are you going, Lady Alicia ?"

"With you, part of the way ; I want to speak to you, and the carriage is at the door," returned her ladyship, taking abrupt leave of her friends, and accompanying him down the stairs.

"Well, lady, what have you to say to me ?" said O'Driscoll, as he seated himself beside her in the equipage.

"This, Maurice," she answered with offended mien, as she stared reproachfully into his attentive face : "You astonished me, and others as well, by your total forgetfulness of your own dignity and self-respect ;—don't interrupt me, pray, I know what I am saying. The wild way you

went on with that artful girl, little short of actual impropriety ; I really thought you would have kissed her when she got up such a fit of sentiment to move your too impressionable heart. I'm sure if it's a fortune you want with a wife, you needn't stoop so low for it. You are not so fallen from high estate as to be content to descend to degradation."

"My dear friend, you are talking Sanscrit to me ; I don't understand what you mean," returned O'Driscoll, loftily. "I have not done anything that I am aware of improper or unbecoming the position in which I stand to Miss Fitzpatrick, with my engagement to whom my mother and her uncle are quite pleased."

"Hold !—you will kill me ! Do you mean to say you are engaged to her—to Alphonse ?"

"Yes ; why not ? I've been long attached to her ; she is my *beau ideal* of human perfection and excellence ; so far above me, that I had given over as hopeless striving for a prize a monarch might have been blessed to win, when the mad exploit of Colandisk resulted in fortune being propitious, and disposing the peerless——"

"Say no more ; that will do. I'm sorry for you. Are you not going to the prison ?—I must go home," cried Lady Alicia, incoherently, as, struck to the heart, she lay back in the carriage.

"I shall see you home," said O'Driscoll, mildly, and compassionating in his soul the disappointed being who made no effort to control or disguise her ill-regulated feelings ; for, though annoyed beyond measure, and entertaining but slight esteem, and no liking whatever, for the wilful woman who laid siege to capture his affection, it were not in human nature not to be flattered and softened by the extravagant predilection she manifested towards him. Leaving her at the door of her mansion, with a few courteous words of leave-taking, from which she sullenly turned, muttering in tone loud enough for him to hear, "You know I loved you, yet you spurned me for her. Await the issue ; a Luttrell will not lightly brook scorn," the portal closed between them, and O'Driscoll, like one disburdened of an incubus, hastened with elastic step and buoyant spirit to visit the prisoner of Newgate.

CHAPTER XLII.

VICISSITUDES OF FORTUNE.

"For stillness now—the stillness of the dead,
Hath wrapt that conflict's lone and awful scene,
And man's forsaken homes in ruin spread,
Tell where the storming of the cliffs hath been;
Sunk are the ancient dwellings of her fame,
The children of her sons inherit but the name."

HEMANS.

THE action in which Miles had last taken part previous to his being made prisoner in the routed division which was convoying the women and children of the insurgent camp to the Glen of Imaile, was the last of any magnitude that took place between the loyalists and the patriots, though several skirmishes on a lesser scale of desultory warfare continued to be fought between the contending parties. We have seen the grand historic figures of the nation arrayed in banded phalanx to achieve the noblest emprise that ever fired the enthusiasm and glorified the aspiration of human bosom, to break the strong arm of tyranny, and enfranchise an enslaved people. Large of mind, and endowed with qualities magnificent of heart and soul, yet, thwarted by adverse fate, their hands failed in grasping the prize to which their high courage had tided them, and which farther and ever farther, like the mirage of the desert, receded beyond their reach, till weary of pursuing the fair illusion, lofty hopes toned down, and glory's dream vanished in the mournful waking of bosoms bold to dare, strong to endure, and now in storm, and cloud, and rain, breaking desolate and forlorn while the world went its way rejoicing, shouting pæans for the winner, and recking not of the seed laid in the furrow, forgotten, but fructifying not the less surely, to burst forth in the coming spring with the guerdon of harvest, when they

who sowed in tears shall reap in joy, and the crowned effort shall compensate for the futile struggle!

Disenchanted of the brilliant romance that had but lately woven, in gorgeous tissue, an aureole of splendour about his life's morning, and sobered by the hue of the pale gray day lengthening before him, Miles, immured in the same prison with Father Fitzpatrick, but in a different and worse compartment, stoically resigned himself to his altered circumstances, and weaving in conjecture his probable future, into which the phantom visitant had given him a foresight. Yes; a transported felon he should languish out the residue of his life in convict's chains, and his dust should lie beneath the flowers of a foreign land. So for himself he had no more to hope or fear; but for the unknown fate of the child Effie, Nelly Doyle, Ned Burke, and others who claimed his interest, he was grieved and sorely troubled. His brother Hugh—he thought of him with a pang of regret, begotten of a strange, instinctive consciousness that took the form of a presentiment that he should never see him more. They had, as was not their wont, embraced at their last parting, which was invested with a solemnity of unusual character; though few words were spoken between them, yet the pressure of each hand, and the look into each other's eyes, seemed now significantly portentous of the doom that when next those hands grasped and those eyes smiled greeting, it would not be in this world. Then came a thought of Florence Esmond, banished as soon as presented; yet with a tear welling up in his indignant eye. What demented his reason, under any circumstance, ever to think of her in connexion with his destiny? Would the highborn daughter of wealth and fashion—willing, indeed, to ally with a triumphant victor—waste a thought upon a fallen hero, a defamed rebel? He was in such full swing of vigorous rumination upon the second day of his captivity, that his theme was quite disorganised by the grating of the ponderous key of the jailer in the lock of his prison door, and the consecutive entrance of a robust figure, whose proprietorship he could not, in the gloom of the dungeon, well make out, till a familiar voice, shouting aloud: "What a hole! worse than a pigsty! Fetch a light!

Oh, oh! I've broke my shin! Where is he? I say, Miles, come out here!" announced the presence of Captain Courtney.

With swift revulsion of feeling, Miles came forward, smiling: "Captain Courtney, I am glad to see you; this is, indeed, kind of you. Will you sit down?"

He offered the chair, but was repulsed with:

"No, you blockhead! Come along; I'm half-stifled and whole poisoned. I had no idea it was such an *inferno*, or I had never dreamed of such a step: typhus will be the end, and my death will be at Percy's door. Hang you, will you come on; are you fettered or bewitched?"

"But am I free to go?" cried Miles, looking at the jailer with doubt and wonder.

"Oh, you dolt!—you thick-headed fellow! Don't you see the warrant in my hand?" roared the captain. "Did you suppose we were going to leave Percy in the hands of the Croppies when we could make an exchange, and Colandisk, writing letters all smirched with dirt and tears, conjuring us to pity him. Get on, get on; I cannot speak to you here; it's getting late, and dinner will be overdone. Much you care, with your strong young stomach that could digest a saddle; but it destroys me, and that daft Florence Esmond goading me to come fetch you myself, till she nearly drove me wild; as if the order sent to the jailer wouldn't, as I told her, have done as well; but I suppose she thinks you an idiot that would have lost your way in the streets. Oh, the blessed fresh air! Call the noddy. Good-day, Mr. Turnkey; you'll not catch me going again in a hurry to visit your dominion on any pretext. There, jump in;—and now, coachman, have us home in a jiffey."

Miles, five minutes since a hopeless denizen of Newgate, awaiting a patriot convict's doom, now rattling in a noddy along the thoroughfares of the gay metropolis to dine among an aristocratic Government circle, seemed to be illustrating in his own person the mythological fiction realised, of transmigration of souls: steeped in trance-like stupor, and as if spell-bound in silence, he suffered the garrulous captain's volubility to flow on uninterrupted. Mechanically, when

the vehicle stopped, he alighted and followed him to the drawingroom. Stolidly he surveyed, confounded, the well-dressed company that filled the saloon, heard Mrs. Courtney's exclamation as she came forward to welcome him:

"Oh, dear me! I am so delighted to see you, now that we are safe out of all the fighting and dreadful work;—it was shocking!" Like one in lethargy he returned the smile and greeting of Florence Esmond, Alphonse Fitzpatrick, and Ethel, as though he felt it to be a dream which would disperse like many another in illusion. He gazed upon the scene, mute and rapt; nor was it till the cheery voice of O'Driscoll, ringing up the stairs, caught his abstracted ear, that he seemed to rouse up and realise that he was not thrall'd by some glamour of magic. Maurice entered the saloon, accompanied by Don Antonio. The eyes of all three met in recognition, and the greeting that ensued with the consciousness of friendly faces grouping round him, beaming honest sympathy and truth, restored him to his equilibrium.

"I proclaim myself a convert henceforth to the dogma of whosoever inculcates a creed in the abstruse science of mystical lore, cabala, witchcraft, and sorcery of dream-land," cried O'Driscoll, as enthusiastically he rung the hand of Miles. "I was dreaming of you all last night that you were ploughing beside me, and so here you are. I did not know you had come to town till half an hour ago I met Marmion, who told me how matters stood, and that there had been an exchange of warriors. Would to heaven we could have exchanged at the Boyne; it had saved some trouble since."

"I," said Don Antonio, "am personally rejoiced at any event that affords me an opportunity of renewing acquaintance with a gallant friend but for whose brave arm I had long since been a subject of Neptune's realm."

"Dinner!" shouted the pompous butler, as he threw open the door, and with stentorian voice, moved, as by the touch of a spring, all the figures of the saloon into motion.

"I was so very, very sorry for you," whispered

Florence Esmond, as she took Miles's proffered arm, and lingered aside till the leaders of the cortege swept by. "But so thankful you have escaped all worse fortune, henceforth you must consider yourself our hostage."

Miles, gazing tenderly upon the noble, candid face, that yet shyly bent downward shunned his eye, replied earnestly: "Worse fate, indeed, might have been mine; nevertheless, if I must congratulate my better fortune, chide not that some regret for our lost cause mingles in the cup."

There was no response; Florence Esmond had too sensitive a perception not to understand

"What heroes feel,
When all but life and honour's lost,"

and that anything she could say on the subject might but probe more acutely the arrow festering in the sore wound, and in silence, amid the general hum and buzz of conversation around them, they took their place at the board. Miles, notwithstanding the satisfaction of being seated next to Florence, feeling altogether out of his latitude in the alien circle, where if some might pity, few would sympathise with him, and to be an object of commiseration, indebted to condescension for patronage, revolted his proud nature beyond endurance, and by no means contributed to render him an agreeable guest, as haughtily taciturn, and on the *qui vive* to resent the smallest expression of implied affront, he sat sternly, questioning himself: "What brought me here? Why did I suffer myself, like a mindless imbecile to be so kidnapped? Could I not have foreseen that I was brought, not to make one of a family circle, but to be the butt of criticism, and the scape-goat of curiosity and scorn? Peace, peace!—let me see out the farce, and be more wary henceforth."

It has been said, that in foreign countries the circle of private saloons neutralizes all rank, the same observation might apply to the well-bred aristocratic home circle in a yet wider sense; for though the prestige and antecedents of the insurgent Miles O'Byrne were well-known

to all present, no expression or gesture, even by implication, could be construed to convey the smallest sense of anything short of courteous deference to the stranger, and studious care to avoid any topic likely to hurt or embarrass his feelings. In one case alone the free and easy deportment which, banishing constraint and awkward formality, promotes genial intercourse, and establishes the most distant on a friendly footing of equality, was overdone by Lord Carhampton, who in his extreme *empressement* to honour the stranger, treated him with a ceremony that might befit a magnate of renown, but which addressed to Miles, was fraught with a sense of hyperbole akin to satire, which if it did not discompose his self-possession cased in armour of proof, inspired him with a cordial dislike to the obsequious nobleman. The usual routine of the aristocratic dinner-table—soup, fish, wine, viands, *entremets*, courses—having been duly observed, seasoned with the prescribed condiment of table talk and small chat while the desert was being set, Maurice O'Driscoll, now publicly recognised as accepted suitor by Alphonse Fitzpatrick, next to whom he sat, turning to Lord Carhampton, who with side glance levelled from the corner of his eye, was watching Florence Esmond's graceful tact in beguiling her dull companion into light pleasant conversation, accosted him, saying :

"We saw the Chief Secretary this morning, Don Antonio and I, and it pleased the god to lend a propitious ear to our suit : he will spare an hour from press of business on Thursday next to give an audience to Fitzpatrick."

Carhampton smiled, shrugging his shoulders, and elevating his eyebrows. "*Tant mieux*, but I understand from Claudius Beresford the favour, not *selon regle*, has been only granted because the priest intimated that he had something to say which he would only impart to the ear of Castlereagh."

"I want to know what the young man has been imprisoned at all for ? Such a den ! I wonder he isn't dead by this," exclaimed Captain Courtney, who, very much pre-

possessed with Alphonse Fitzpatrick, felt some interest in her brother.

"He was accused upon some testimony unknown to us, of being implicated in the society of the United Irishmen," said Don Antonio. "Now I know that was not the case. My nephew never interfered in politics, he had enough to do besides."

"Why did you not press for a trial? That would have cleared up the matter one way or another," said Marmion Esmond.

"We did so over and over," replied Don Antonio. "But some underhand influence has been at work against us. Father Patrick took an active part in promoting the suppression of some bad houses in Crane-lane and elsewhere, supported by that infamous fellow Higgins, and we know that he conspires with some other parties to defeat justice and retain hold of their victim; but, when Lord Castlereagh sees him and hears his defence, it will result in an order for his liberation."

"Not without Claudius Beresford's sanction," said Carhampton. "You know that the Beresfords rule the Castle, and in the fact that your friend is a priest they will find matter enough to condemn."

"A fine state of things," exclaimed O'Driscoll. "I'm glad to see Grattan is returned to Dublin; we want some such leviathan to shake the senate up to remodel the constitution, and so adjust everything into order that justice may act untrammelled by judges, unwarped by juries, and uninfluenced by rabbles, and that overt crime, not proscribed creed, may be the test of a man's deserts and assign the measure of his penalty. When will our legislators learn to have common sense."

"You can expect no flower where there is no root," observed Miles. "Would the country have been plunged into all the horrors of insurrection had there been a few wise men at the helm of state to control and master the tide of oppression that swept over it? Never."

"Why was not the country amenable to the views of Government, and submissive to the policy of Castlereagh?" said Lord Carhampton, blandly. "Why did the

insubordinate people oppose the proposed measure of the Union, and obstruct Parliament in voting for it? It has resulted but in their own punishment, and will not, I anticipate, stay the progress of the inevitable issue, for Castlereagh is inexorably bent on carrying his point, and many of the members are with him."

"It may be so," said Miles, bitterly, "for he has the powers of darkness leagued with him against us as well."

"And I," cried O'Driscoll, wrathfully, "reiterate, in the words of Plunket, that Parliament is incompetent to pass the Act of Union, that it will be a nullity, no man will be bound to obey it. Members are elected and appointed to exercise the functions of legislators, not to transfer them; they may extinguish themselves, but they cannot extinguish a national property. The suicide might as well hope that the act which destroys his body should annihilate his soul. It can never be, for all Castlereagh's audacious efforts."

"I say, Miles," exclaimed Captain Courtney, "now that you broached yourself the theme, and so loosed our tongues, how comes it that your invincible legions, after having wrestled with the might of England, and floored St. George and the dragon in so many a stiff bout, and, egad, making us quake up here like leaves on an aspen, that you collapsed all of a sudden, not victors, yet certainly not licked to any extent worth an ovation by our doughty heroes? Had you held out a month longer I might have thought of joining you. Why didn't you push on, and make good your vaunt of some fine things—not for lack of impudent courage, I'll be sworn?"

"Not from lack of courage," solemnly repeated Miles, transported in thought from the scene to the ruin, and as he conjured up with vivid distinctness each circumstance of that night his visage unconsciously underwent a transformation of expression that riveted the notice of all, as he added, in tone hollow and mysterious: "No, not for lack of courage; victors, yet slaves and bondsmen in our own land!"

"Oh, bother!—no such thing, I gainsay that. What conundrum are you coining?" cried O'Driscoll. "That's

the only thing I take exception to with Catholics—they are too ascetic: pardon my bluntness, ye of the ancient creed, whose other merits I admit and extol; but I do and will maintain that fish diet so frequently, and maceration of the flesh, is highly injurious to the spirit, and adverse to the development of a robust frame, and sleek, comely physiognomy. Now, just to illustrate the theory, compare, Miles, yourself, with Courtney and me—choice specimens of the genus *homo*—and shout a *credo* in beef and mutton.”

Miles laughed. “I fear your theory would be open to much conflicting argument; but there is one thing you must admit in favour of meagre diet—it does not impair muscle and sinew, or the quality of nerve and valour in the soldier’s bosom. I cite, for example, the thousands of our brave peasants who fought and bled in our cause. No sons of luxury they, and yet I question if knightly arm might boast of equal prowess.”

“A case in point not to be denied,” said Captain Courtney, good-humouredly. “Maurice, we are defeated, my boy, but, for all that, I’ll be no convert to fish. Let us toast our absent friends,” he added, as Mrs. Courtney made a sign for the ladies to withdraw.

In those bygone days of convivial sociality, with the absence of the fair monitresses vanished all deferential restraint. The wine-cup circulated freely, and tongues, hitherto bound by conventional rule, let loose, gave voluble swing to the pent-up thoughts and feelings of the guests, according to each one’s individual bias of mind or interest, and as these were various, and prone to collide in clash of argument, Miles O’Byrne, vigilantly on the watch for the first indication of the current setting against him, took an early opportunity, pleading a headache, to retire to the more genial sphere of the drawingroom, and the more attractive society of Florence Esmond, whose delicately-conveyed sentiments and candidly expressed sympathy had been very grateful to his heart, and revived the pleasurable consciousness that, affect whom it might, his altered fortune had wrought no change in her regard, and that the dream he had loved to cherish might, at least in part, be realised yet. Then—then—since fate had denied

the higher guerdon of his aspiration, in the devotion and love of a dear wife, and crowned with domestic felicity, in the seclusion of some Arcadian scene, might he not be happy?—ay, remote from the tumult of the world, make for himself and those he loved an Eden upon earth? Filled with thoughts like these, he entered the saloon, and with brow smooth and serene, and beaming eye, he seated himself beside Florence, who made room for him on the divan, and beckoned him, with a smile, to approach.

"I am so glad, so glad and so thankful to you," he whispered, looking at Alphonse, who, engaged with Ethel and Mrs. Courtney at the piano, had not seen him enter, "that what I had so wished has fallen out, and that Miss Fitzpatrick has consented to make my friend O'Driscoll happy, as he deserves to be."

Florence returned, smiling: "I had no hand, I may say, in the business, therefore I should accept your thanks upon a false pretence. Maurice came and irresistibly pleaded his cause. He chose an auspicious hour, and his suit was granted. I am sure they will be very happy, their ideas and natures appear to be so similar;" and as she spoke, Alphonse Fitzpatrick, turning to address some words to her, perceived Miles, and came forward, but had no time to express the words her sympathy and gratitude had suggested, when O'Driscoll entered, yearning for the more agreeable company of the fair *fiancée*, whom he joined, saying, with a laugh:

"I protest I am rather disposed, shock whom I may by the assertion, to regard those duplicate kings, Pharaoh and Herod, in the light of benefactors to the world; certainly to construe mildly of their offence in decimating the male population of their day. Bless us! what a reign of luxurious ease would be ours, if some savagely-beneficent potentate would arise in this our time, and, weeding society, leave but a few privileged ones of our pugnacious sex to enjoy the beatitude of the *peri's* dominions!"

"Just like you, men, selfish ever!" exclaimed a voice that, jarring discordantly upon his nerves, disarranged every chord that had quivered with harmonious music in his bosom; and O'Driscoll, taken by surprise, fixed a most

dramatic stare upon Lady Alicia Luttrell, who, wholly unexpected, had just entered with her friend Miss Gubbins, who was in deep mourning for one of her sisters, who had been burned in Scullabogue Barn by the rebels when they fired it, in fierce reprisal of the camp, with their wounded of two hundred men, being consumed to ashes previously by the royalist troops. "Irrespective of our feelings," continued the lady, smiling, half-satirically, half-sweetly, "you would condemn us to the option of polygamy or celibacy, or even risk tearing out each other's eyes for sake of the dear creatures so limitedly sprinkled among us; but, the stars be blessed! there's no chance of your becoming such demigods, and we shall have enough to choose among," she glanced graciously at Miles. Then, familiarly taking Alphonse's hand and pressing it between her own, with a smile that might have become a seraph, she added, looking full at the discomposed O'Driscoll, and speaking *sotto voce*: "You must give me credit for being very amiable, when I tell you I accepted Mrs. Courtney's invitation for this evening that I might prove how entirely to have forgiven you and felicitated dear Alphonse on her conquest;" she kissed the young girl. "We must always be great friends; shall we not?"

"I hope so," smiled Alphonse, diffidently, and looking for corroborative sign at O'Driscoll, who, quite relieved and gained over by Lady Alicia's frank and generous proceeding, made haste to answer:—

"Thank you, thank you, Lady Alicia. I respond to your good wishes along with Alphonse. I hope we shall always be good friends, and I quite retract all I said in a fit of spleen in favour of King Herod, offering, in excuse or extenuation of my testy humour that, with my ears moldered from the din of altercation among the gods over their wine, coming into a region redolent of perfume, zephyrs, music, and sunshine, my too loquacious tongue gave out the thought of my heart."

"I'm glad you're penitent," simpered Lady Alicia, seating herself on a chair next to Miles, and with bewitching smile, essaying a cast of her net to entangle another prize—not one that took her fancy—but though differing

in style from O'Driscoll, he was of appearance not less imposing, indeed more so. With swift perception, too, she had divined, as sedate and amused he watched her movements, that there seemed to be something more than ordinary courtesy between him and Florence Esmond. A smile, a look of understanding she had noticed pass between them; it was enough. She would enter the lists for conquest, to what end she did not quite well know yet; for she had not even now relinquished all hope or thought of O'Driscoll, whom she meant to gall with jealousy. Yes, she would oust Florence Esmond, and drag Miles a willing thrall to her feet; but more—she hesitated, awed by his mien—she did not think she could brook him for a liege lord.

So, while O'Driscoll sat apart with Alphonse absorbed in tender converse, and rapt in present oblivion of all the world beside, and grave Don Antonio, followed by the half-inebriated company from the diningroom, trooped with noisy clamour of tongues into the saloon for tea and coffee and music, Lady Alicia applied herself to the congenial task of snaring hearts, and the more guarded or impregnable the fortress was likely to prove, all the more resolutely she set to work her engines to reduce it. Masked batteries, open assault, secret undermining, nothing should be left untried, and vigorously she commenced operations, while Florence Esmond, amazed, looked helplessly on. And Miles, fortified in his position, and discerning her tactics, diverted beyond expression, fenced with the fair besieger, and plied his own missiles of wit and humour, banter and raillery, to foil, cajole, combat, and rout her from the field, all to no purpose: she held her ground.

CHAPTER XLIII.

GLEAMS OF SUNSHINE.

" A moment only and the light and glory
Faded away, and the disconsolate shore
Stood lonely as before,
And the wild roses of the promontory
Around me shuddered in the wind, and shed
Their petals of pale red."

LONGFELLOW.

" Know within this form there dwells a soul as high
As warriors in their battles e'er have proved,
Or patriots on the scaffold."

HEMANS.

It was a balmy July morning. Light fleecy clouds of amber-hue were floating on their silent way athwart the luminous expanse of firmament canopying the earth beneath, and from the flaming orb, enthroned in majesty above, streamed down refulgent rays, whose ardour was scarcely tempered by gentle zephyrs, whose wings, fluttering with languid motion, fanned the hill-side and the glade. It was a day surely designed by Nature for a holiday, for her children of every class, from the tiny insect to lordly man, to come forth and revel in the gushing tide of exhilarating joy infused into his bosom, and quaff of the cup she offered, whose ingredients, more delicious than the nectar that crowned Olympian banquets, had power to soothe the troubled breast and instil an elixir of new-born life, health, and strength into the weary spirit of care. Yet, alas! marred by ferocious human passions, Nature's beneficent design was thwarted; for thousands mourned, while but few rejoiced, and scalding tears mingled with blood-stains, among the opening flowers that strewed their path, as, with tired feet pacing the yet dewy green sward, two young girls, mere children in external form, but precociously mature of aspect, came wending along towards the city, whose distant spires were now in view, darkly photographed upon the golden mist of the morning.

"There it is, Nelly!—there's Dublin!" cries Euphemia to her companion, as, after an interval of long silence, her straining eyes caught the first glimpse of the shadowy outlines of their destination. "Now, let us sit down and rest awhile, for I can go no farther. Look at my feet, how swelled and cut they are!—and as for these old shoes, I might as well, and better, be like you, without any, for all the good they are."

"I'm afeard if we sit down we'll find it harder to get up," replied Nelly, at the same time yielding to the luxury, and casting her fatigued limbs upon a bank beside the Dodder, in whose limpid stream she began to plash her bruised and blistered feet. "Are ye sure it's Dublin, Miss Effie? It has a great lot of houses entirely in it."

"I know it is; I know the look of the country all about. I think we are somewhere about Donnybrook. I remember driving this way once with Miles and Hugh."

"An' when we get to Dublin, what'll we do there, *acushla*?" was Nelly's inquiry, with a searching look at her companion. "You know they won't let us see Mr. Miles, an' we don't know what prison he's in naither. Och masha! what a misfortune it was to lose Kitty Burke and Ned in the scrimmage; I wonder wor they killed?"

"I'm afraid they were, Nelly;—but what's the use of fretting? Maybe Miles is dead, too. If I could find the priest I used to go to confession to, Father Paul Finn; but he was sent to another chapel before I left school, and a young priest came in his place. At any rate, we'll see some priest, and he'll advise us what to do. I wish we had something to eat; I'm very hungry."

"So am I, Miss Effie. We haven't tasted a mouthful since yesterday morning, an' then only a couple o' praties the poor woman gave us, an' we walkin' the whole time, except a stop now an' agin to rest."

"And we haven't a penny between us to get a bit of bread," said Effie, despondingly.

"Maybe, *alanna*, if ye went among yer friends some of 'em 'ud give you anyway a meal out o' kindness," suggested Nelly. "I wonder now would them schoolmissuses take pity on ye?" Effie gave a scornful laugh.

"If I could get over my shame to ask them they would not, Nelly. They'd give me a long lecture about my wickedness, and jibe me that I was the prodigal, come back from being famished on husks, and all that. I wonder is Miss Fitzpatrick there still?—she would help me if she could, I know; but she hasn't much herself. I don't know what we'll do."

"I'll tell ye what we'll do, Miss Effie!" exclaimed Nelly, struck by a sudden inspiration that imparted vivacity to every feature; "we'll earn our bread!"

Effie opened her eyes very wide, and laughed incredulously. "Unless we turn to beg, Nelly, I don't see how we are to set about it in this trim. Suppose I went and asked to be employed at needlework they'd shut the door in my face, and if you offered for kitchenmaid you'd get no better answer."

"I'm not goin' to hire to anyone but myself an' be my own mistress!" said Nelly, with a toss of her head; "nor do you naither: we've both got too good an edication to demean ourselves to sarvice! Here's my plan: you've an illigant voice, Miss Effie, an' I've a good wit. Let you an' I go together—one to sing ballads and me to tell fortunes. Never fear but we'll earn what'll keep us in influence onot we scrape together enough to mask in charachter. I with a gipsy hat an' cloak an' you dressed like a May-queen; won't it be beautiful?" Effie gazed in meditative silence; the original idea pleased her immensely.

"I declare, Nelly, you're worth your weight in gold!" she cried at length, enthusiastically. "And we can travel over the whole country, and go to fairs and dances, and see fun, and live as happy as two queens, you and I—only ——" A sudden cloud darkened the spirit of the dream. "If we happened on Miles or Hugh, what would they say?"

"I dunno what they could say, Miss Effie. I don't suppose they'd want us to starve for the grandeur of the family, an' it 'ud be worse shame to beg or to steal. Just do as ye like. I've a good voice o' my own and can act in two parts, if ye'd liefer stay at home and mind the house: only I thought two would earn more nor one; besides the company. Will you get up an' come on? I

hear a bell ringin' somewhere; an' I doubt is there any chapel where we could get Mass this Sunday mornin'? Sure I'd have niver come so far from home, but that all belongin' to me is undher the sod, except you and Johnny, barrin' he's kilt wid the rest. God rest their souls in glory!"

Effie rose wearily, saying: "Maybe we'll be in time for last Mass in Clarendon-street; and, Nelly, I've made up my mind for us both to go on the stage—that is, you turn gipsy and tell fortunes and I sing ballads, and who knows our luck? Come on!"

Having thus debated and satisfactorily settled the programme of their future career, the juvenile friends, with renovated spirit, resumed their march.

It was the Sabbath Day; the city was musical with the ringing of church bells and alive with processions of people in *gala* costume filing along to the place of worship. Amid the joyous peal of metal tongues calling to prayer, the voice of the Catholic temple alone was mute: no chime from tower or belfry sprinkled the air with hallowed echoes vibrating upon the ear, but, like a mourner in the crowd, stood the solemn fane, apart and hidden out of public view, with silent finger lifted, beckoning her children to her bosom, and, answering to her summons, they came crowding. A motley throng, for the most part, gleaned from the pur-lieus of misery. Squalid, naked, not attractive to human sense in any wise, the fœtid stream of poverty flowed on and coagulated in dense mass in the aisle of Clarendon-street chapel, Denmark-street, and other resorts of ancient worship; while, segregated from the multitude, like flowers gathered in a bouquet, a few of better degree and favoured with worldly substance, bedizen in gay trappings, filled the galleries and more reserved portions of the edifice. Within the chancel of Clarendon-street chapel was already congregated a good many of the Roman Catholic citizens, while others still came crowding in, and acolytes were lighting the candles on the altar. Don Antonio and Alphonse Fitzpatrick occupied a front bench beside Miles O'Byrne, who had come early. And so absorbed in profound devotion was each that, heeding not the influx that soon over-



crowded the limited enclosure, they merely drew up more closely to make room for a gentleman who came and knelt beside Alphonse, till a cough, whether accidental or designed, drew their attention, and Alphonse, lifting her eyes, met the unclouded, joyous smile of Maurice O'Driscoll.

It may be that in each human life there are moments given, whose supreme felicity typifies or foreshadows the beatitude of the blessed, when the thrill, as of a drop from a magic vial, glides into the secret soul and wakes it to a perception of bliss, transporting it beyond the verge of life's trailing cares and the world's oppressive slumber to rest in the unexplored regions of eternal peace; when the spirit, replumed for flight, shakes from its pinions the dust of earth, and soars like an eagle to bask in the blaze of the sun, and make its nest among golden clouds for evermore. Such moments may be given to mortals, but to many they are the sure precursor of the brooding storm, presaged by the very tinge of melancholy, beautiful yet ominous, as the autumnal tints of bloom that forerun leafless woods and desolate plains, or the evanescent glory of western skies prelude the sunset and the midnight hour; yet no tinge of the crepe cast a shadow upon the white light that rapt the soul of Maurice O'Driscoll at this moment in elysium. That look, that smile of Alphonse's had stirred every pulse of his heart to quivering music; and in long future years, beneath the skies of distant lands, pilgrim through a cold gray world, where Hope's blossoms never fruited, and dreams of beatitude vanished in the gloom of dawn, and the crash of the storm that wrecked hearts and homes, and blotted out stars and sunshine, the golden memory of this hour—the lighted altar, the vested priest, the kneeling throng, the solemn roll of the organ, the wafting incense, the rapt devotion of the worshippers, the form of his affianced bride, transfigured, to the semblance, in his eyes, of a celestial being rendering homage before the Holy of Holies, all and every iota of this scene, indelibly impressed on his heart, defied obliteration. Oh, it was a happy day in his life's calendar! But what for Alphonse? Tremulous with emotion she prayed—every

prayer was for him—in the full tide of her heart's gush of thanksgiving. She united for him a sacrifice with that of the altar; it was accepted. When Mass was over and the crowd departed, she put her hand into his and came forth. How resplendent looked the world. Never shone the sun in so blue a sky, never rolled the turbid Liffey waters so tinted with gold: there was melody in the sound of every voice, and perfume in the rustle of every breeze!

"What brought the scape-goat among the sheep, let me ask?" cried Don Antonio, good-humouredly, striking Maurice on the shoulder as they proceeded home. "Hadh't you your own church to go to?" Maurice screwed his lips with comic expression:

"Well, yes; but you see as I am no believer in the stability of a divided house, and the fanatics have failed to convince me that the charter of salvation is exclusively theirs, by right of their superior sanctity, I feel more of a mind to jog along with my wife her way, which is just as likely to be the right one to heaven, craving her leave to go now and again to church for variety, and to keep the parson in good humour and give edification."

Miles laughed. "Your children will be all piebald!—good heaven! your house will be like a menagerie."

"Meroy on me, you Job's comforter!—is not that the very thing I am trying to avoid? Only fancy, Alphonse, our eldest son a Quaker. No, no; my family shall be a pattern of harmony, you exasperating fellow: and to achieve the *desideratum*, set the example. What are you blushing for? Here comes a concourse of variegated costume and piety streaming from St. Andrew's, and blocking up the crossing, conspicuous among them Lady Alicia Luttrell and Lord Carhampton. Now defend yourself, Ulysses, from being besired, while Alphonse and I make off to Kildare-street, where mother expects us to luncheon."

"I'm so happy to meet you, Mr. O'Byrne," exclaimed Lady Alicia, shaking hands with Miles, bowing stiffly to Don Antonio, and gazing with splenetic eyes after the stately form of O'Driscoll, moving down Nassau-street,

and the graceful figure of Alphonse, fleet as a deer, and undulating as a slender reed twined to an oak, leaning on his arm. "You will be glad to hear," she added, "Percy Esmond and Colandisk arrived yesterday;—but come to luncheon, and we'll tell you all the news."

"Sorry I can't, Lady Alice;—I'm engaged," said Miles, curtly.

"Oh, tut, sir, tut," cried Lord Carhampton; "no engagement can stand against a lady's request: you must come, and your friend, Don Antonio."

"How if there be two ladies in question?" bluntly answered unsophisticated Miles. "I have promised Miss Esmond, and only turned out of my way to see Don Antonio as far as Dame-street, on his way to Newgate. *Honneur mon enfant*, as the French say—Honour stands first. *Adieu au revoir*." And lifting his hat to the lady, with utmost *sangfroid*, Miles passed on his way, leaving Lady Alicia sulkily pouting, and Lord Carhampton muttering between his teeth:

"Impudent puppy! When we honour him again with an invitation he'll come on his knees. So Miss Esmond is the quarry he pursues, as I suspected. Well, I'll foil that chase. I'll see Marmion this very day, and put him on his guard, and make him kick out the interloper, if he would not see his family disgraced by alliance with a popish Irish rebel."

While thus Lady Alicia and Lord Carhampton sought solace in each other's vexation, and Miles and Don Antonio pursued their separate routes, O'Driscoll and his companion, in great glee, made their way to Kildare-street. Lady O'Driscoll, on the watch, received them as they ascended the stairs, and having over and over embraced Alphonse with expressions of endearment, and been greeted with reciprocal caresses by her future daughter-in-law, she conducted her to the drawingroom, where she was surprised and disconcerted at the sight of her aunt, Miss Fanny Higgenboggan; but the soft voice of Lady O'Driscoll, saying: "My love, your aunt is very glad to see you," and the corroborative smile and approach of the lady to kiss her, banished diffidence,

and amused at Maurice's surreptitious grimace of annoyance, she extended her hand, and said softly, and with bright eye:

"Aunt, I'm glad to see you, and hope you won't be angry any more."

"Don't say a word more, child," cried Miss Fanny, chattering in her excitement to vindicate herself. "I was angry with you, Alphonse, for your own good, when you so ridiculously gave up the fine fortune Jerry left you : threw it away upon dogs and donkeys, rather than give up your own will, and conform to our enlightened Church. It grieved us to see a wealthy heiress give up a good match; her position in society, and tumble down to the grade of a pauper ; but for all that I pitied you, and if it weren't for Sophy, and her mulish temper, I'd have forgiven you long ago."

"And has Aunt Sophy forgiven me?" said Alphonse, eagerly.

"No, my dear ; Sophy never forgives a fault in anyone ; you should know her better than to ask me ; at any rate, I'm not living with Sophy now. Don't interrupt me ;—sit down beside me here. There was no bearing her after you left, she grew so morose. I did my best to please her, but she no more heeded me than a dog barking. She turned to make confidantes and familiars of the two menials, who, soon fathoming her shallow mind, laid themselves out to flatter, dupe, and rob her. I cautioned her over and over, but to no purpose, except to draw servants' malice on my own head. I was robbed by them, annoyed, disrespected, and ill-treated in a thousand ways, till at last, in self-defence, just one week ago, I had to unbosom myself to our parson, Nathaniel Lamb. I declare, my dear, there's one thing in your Church I don't think so badly of, and that's confession : it is a great relief to be able sometimes to unburden one's mind to a discreet friend."

"Well, aunty, go on ; what did Mr. Lamb advise?"

Now this simple question operated with such singular effect upon Miss Fanny, that Alphonse looked at Maurice and Maurice looked at his mother. The old lady hesitated, got into a nervous twitter that compelled a brick-coloured

hue to her shrivelled cheek, and finally mastering her emotion, she said: "You know, Alphonse, I was always a matter-of-fact person, and never in my life, that I know of, was given to romance. I always took things in a sensible point of view; so I feel less difficulty in saying that when I told Nathaniel how I was circumstanced, and asked his counsel, he advised me at once to marry and have a protector; that with my fine separate independence I owed it as a duty to myself; then I objected that I was, perhaps, rather beyond the age to think of it, not being, as he knew, in my *premiere jeunesse*. He replied that made no matter, but with sensible parties would be in my favour. To shorten the story, the poor fellow confessed he had long been devoted to me himself; but that he feared it was presumption to aspire to my hand—and—and—why need I recount all that followed? He proposed, I accepted. Fifteen years between us, at our time of life, he assured me was no disparity, and that if I dressed youthfully it would take ten years from my age; so that being settled, on the spot he insisted upon my leaving Sophy, and giving my casket of jewels, and bank-cheques, and receipts to him for greater safety. He took handsome lodgings for me the same day; and it proved his foresight; for nothing could equal Sophy's rage and jealousy when I disclosed the secret. She called me an old fool, spoke of an asylum and a strait jacket; and, in fact, lest she'd put me up, I made my escape that very night. The next day Nathaniel brought a solicitor, and we had the marriage articles drawn up, I making over to him my ready money, and he settling a jointure on me; so all that remained was to order the cake and wedding dress, which is to be of white satin, as he preferred that. I'd have preferred dove colour, but he said it was not so becoming. Now wouldn't it be nice if we could both be married on the same day; but mine is to be on the first of September, and yours, I understand, is fixed for the week after next."

Miss Fanny, having come to the end of her story, paused to hear what her auditors would say; but having waited in vain full two minutes for the expected tribute of commendation and compliment, and perceiving only dubious glances,

more expressive of wonder and compassion than of congratulation pass between them, she waxed petulant, and cried :

"Don't you approve of what I've done ? I suppose you think it would have been better for me to have died a forlorn old maid and left my money, as Jerry did, to inferior animals, or other people's brats ?"

"Oh, no, aunt, you had a right to do what you pleased," said Alphonse, mildly, but with sad, thoughtful brow. "I hope you will be happy, indeed I do."

"You have all our best wishes, Miss Fanny," gallantly cried Maurice, filling out the wine. "Come, every one, drink a pledge ! Mother, cheer up ; I like better to hear of wedding breakfasts than funeral orations. Send over some veal pie."

"Mind, you are all invited to mine, and, Alphonse, I depend upon you to help me ; and Lady O'Driscoll, I know, will stand my friend upon the solemn occasion," said Miss Fanny, restored to good-humour, and chuckling : "Lady Alicia Luttrell, Jemima Hodgens, and two of the Pomfret girls are to be my bridesmaids."

"Oh, certainly, count upon any assistance I can give," returned Lady O'Driscoll, smiling, as she caught the mirthful twinkle in the eye of Maurice. "We must give a party for the bride and bridegroom."

"Who are to be your bridesmaids, Alphonse, and what will be your wedding-dress ?" demanded Miss Fanny.

"Florence Esmond and Ethel Courtney, with some other young friends to whom they have introduced me," said Alphonse. "My dress will be of white tabinet and veil of Limerick lace, with a beautiful set of pearls, presented by my dear mother-elect."

"Now, child, for once let me give you a piece of my mind," exclaimed her aunt, dogmatically. "Maurice my dear, I may now address you as a nephew"—Maurice bowed—"don't hear of such a thing. I must caution you that Alphonse is very inexperienced, and will have to be guided by your superior taste and judgment. She could not do anything more *outrè* or against the canons of fashion than appear in tabinet and Limerick lace ; such

vulgar parade of nationalism would infallibly expose you to the severest criticism : and why not make her wear her uncle's diamonds instead of pearls, which will be more appropriate later on ? I am proud enough of my niece to wish her to consult her dignity, and appear in style creditable to us all. Now, a handsome white satin like mine, with diamond ear-rings, bracelets, and necklace, shawl of white Spanish lace, and bonnet with marabout feathers, myrtle, and orange blossoms would be the thing."

"Very likely, ma'am, but I'm no judge in these matters, thinking a pretty face looks the same in anything," said Maurice, and he made a sign to Alphonse, who nodded in return, and after a couple of minutes rose. Maurice stood up then, saying : "Mother, hold us excused if we run away. We promised to meet Don Antonio on his return from Newgate. Next Thursday we'll fetch Father Patrick to dine with you, unless his friend Castle-reagh anticipates us. Meanwhile, don't forget you're due at six o'clock to Don Antonio. Shall I call for you ?"

"Oh, yes, mother, he will, and uncle will send the carriage," said Alphonse, quickly intercepting Lady O'Driscoll, who was going to say she would employ a sedan to carry her over.

"I'll go over to see you to-morrow, Alphonse, and give my very kind compliments to your uncle," said Miss Fanny, affectionately kissing her niece, who made answer :

"Thank you, aunt, I will," and she passed out with Maurice, accompanied by Lady O'Driscoll, to the stairs.

Expatiating as they passed along to Don Antonio's residence upon the announced matrimonial engagement of Miss Fanny Higgenboggan and Nathaniel Lamb, her own quondam suitor, Alphonse Fitzpatrick was so immersed in the subject, and full of speculative surmise as to the probable measure at which one might estimate the chances of connubial felicity resulting from such a union, that, as they turned into the Green, she jostled, without even noticing them, against two little girls, who stood on the pathway, one looking at a shilling in her hand, and the other pointing to an opposite row of houses, saying :

"Look, Nelly, there's the school where Miss Hodgens

used to stir us up from morning till night, like a red-hot poker. I detest the sight of it."

Something in the tone of the voice appealing to her ear, conjured bygone reminiscence. She turned, looked at the speaker, and exclaimed, "Effie!"

"Oh, Miss Fitzpatrick, is it you?" re-echoed Effie, in a transport of genuine delight, forgetting every other thought in the one that Alphonse, indeed, stood before her.

"Hillo!" chimed in O'Driscoll, "Queen Mab, when did you come to town?"

"We came up this morning, Nelly and I, to look after Miles, who was taken prisoner in the last battle, and carried up to Dublin," said Effie, with cool self-possession. Father Glynn of Clarendon-street told us he was let out of gaol, and lodging in Townsend-street. We're going to see him."

Maurice gave a low whistle. "You'll not find him at home now, little ones; moreover, I shall dispute with him a claim to add my tribute of acknowledgment to the heroines who so promptly came to the rescue in needful hour, and obliged us by saving our lives in the very crisis of fate. Where are you going now, my bushrangers?"

"I don't know, sir," made answer Nelly. "Father Glynn gave us a shilling to get our breakfast, an' maybe, if Mr. Miles isn't at home, we'd do best to keep some of it to pay for a lodging, if we knew where to get a good one."

"My poor Effie, you will come home with me," said Alphonse, gazing compassionately upon the truant, who now, with a rather shamefaced sense of the condition to which her vagrant propensities had reduced her, said:

"I'd rather not, please, Miss Fitzpatrick: or maybe you're married, and this gentleman is your husband?" she quickly added, with shrewd surmise, that Alphonse, magnificently attired as she was, and looking beautiful and happy, was no longer an inmate of Miss Hodgens' seminary, where she first saw her a pale, dejected governess, humble in mien and poor in appearance.

"By Jove, little one," laughed Maurice, "you would make an expert archer, your shafts as well as your bullets

hit so near the mark. But why won't you go home with Miss Fitzpatrick?"

"My dress is not fit to go anywhere," said Effie, bluntly; "besides, I won't leave Nelly: she and I are going to carry on together."

"Oh, never mind that, Effie," smiled Alphonse. "All the world knows little girls and little boys will be sad romps and tearcoats. We'll mend all that. Your little companion may come, too. Poor children, you look so tired and jaded! Miles is also to dine with us, Effie."

Hearing this, Effie made no further opposition, and quietly she and Nelly followed discreetly, at a few paces distant, while Maurice whispered to Alphonse, as they accelerated their speed:

"Who is that child?"

"I'll tell you by-and-by," returned Alphonse. "You must help me to smuggle them in, till I can trim them up a little before uncle and the servants see them. I don't know who the second child is myself."

They soon arrived at their destination. Maurice knocked, and when the door was opened by the pompous butler he contrived to direct the menial's attention to some object down the street, and hold him engaged, while Alphonse hurried the children up to her own room, where, little suspecting their hungry plight, she at once set to work, after they had washed their hands and faces, to brush their hair, and from her own wardrobe fit them with a change of clothing, which she dexterously contrived with a soissors, abridging the length of skirts, and making such alterations as suited for the present; hence, in about less than half an hour, such was the magical change wrought by her handiwork, that her maid, for whom she rung, coming in with hot water, courtesied reverentially to two young ladies, one arrayed in a pink silk dress, whose lower flounce being cut away, and flower trimmings stripped off, and replaced with a berth of white lace, she never suspected to have seen before, and the other metamorphosed in a blue poplin similarly transfigured, looking complacently satisfied; she returned, unconscious of the bundle of rags stowed away in a corner of the wardrobe, pending their

ejection to Lethe, to fetch up wine and cake to the visitors, of which, when they had partaken, not as much as they could, but what was sufficient to allay the cravings of hunger, and still leave a hearty appetite for a good dinner, and after they had rested, and Alphonse heard their simple and pathetic story, and found that Nelly was Effy's foster-sister, the daughter of humble but decent and comfortable people, and learned their plan of future livelihood, and made her protest against it, saying: "No, no, Effie, that will never do; I cannot forget your kindness once to me, when I had no friend on earth, and really think I should have got brain fever, and perhaps died, but for the good-nature and sympathy you and that poor servant, Kitty, showed me. I was very cross and fretted, and too soured in temper, to acknowledge it then, though I deeply felt it; but now that I can requite, as well as acknowledge it, you shall be my sister, and Nelly will be your sister still. I cannot say yet what arrangements shall be made, till we consult our friends on all sides; but we will do our best to make you happy and comfortable in your own position; and now let us go down to the drawingroom." She took a hand of each and led them on.

When they entered the saloon, O'Driscoll, at the window, holding a warm argument with two gentlemen upon the topic of the day—the Union—had his back turned and did not see them. Miles, seated beside Don Antonio, in confidential mood, had just been entrusting him with a precious secret. He had, within the last hour, favoured by circumstance and opportunity, declared his attachment to Florence Esmonde, and been accepted by the idol of his affection, and Don Antonio, warmly congratulating him on his fortune, had just whispered:

"Come with me to-morrow to my bankers; I have just made over a present sum of thirty thousand pounds to Alphonse and O'Driscoll on their marriage; but I have another obligation to discharge to the man who saved my life. Hush!—let me say on! Don't I know you're as out of funds as I was myself this time forty years ago, when I set out in search of Dame Fortune and seized her by the



golden girdle in the western hemisphere. Occasions of this kind always require an outlay of expenditure, and would you have the proud Esmonds snuff on your poverty?"

"Well, Alphonse, what now?" cried Don Antonio, as interrupting him she came forward in advance of her *protégés*.

"Excuse me, uncle; I want to introduce these little friends." She drew aside, Miles stared. How like Euphemia, only slighter, taller, more sedate and girlish than childlike, was the foremost, while he secretly wondered, rendered incredulous by the marvellous change.

Effie, having responded to Don Antonio's salutation of courtesy, observing his perplexity, with her old characteristic laugh, threw herself into his arms, crying: "Miles, I didn't think you had such a bad memory. There's no one but myself, and here's Nelly."

"Good heavens! children, I have been miserable about you," exclaimed Miles, warmly returning her embrace. "I had written to Dwyer and others, and had made arrangements to go down to Wicklow to look after you. When and how did you come up? With Kitty, of course; and can you tell me anything of Ned?"

"We don't know what's become of poor Ned or Kitty," said Euphemia, sorrowfully; "we came up by ourselves, Nelly and I, and walked the whole way."

"Poor children!" murmured Don Antonio, compassionately.

"In this equipment?" demanded Miles, gravely.

"Oh, no, Miles; we had on our old cloaks," cried Effie.

"Miss Fitzpatrick lent us this dress."

"And what induced you to come so dangerous a journey, my little ladies?" said Don Antonio.

"We wanted to see Miles, and we didn't know what to do with ourselves, where every one we knew was dead or gone away," replied Euphemia.

"And if you hadn't found me—which was a mere chance—what would you have done, you silly children?" said Miles; "you'd have perished on the streets. I shudder to think of it."

"Oh, no, Miles," quickly cried Effie; "we'd have lived very well; Nelly was to tell fortunes, and I to sing ballads. What ails you? are you sick?"

"No, dear, only overpowered," murmured Miles, as he covered his face with his hand, while Don Antonio opened his mouth and eyes to their widest extent; and Alphonse, convulsed with laughter, could only hold her sides, when O'Driscoll came up, and after gazing at her wonderingly, said:

"What have you done with Queen Mab and her aide-de-camp? Did you tell Miles? Do ask your uncle's permission to fetch them in: two beautiful but ragged little colts, sir, to whom Miles and I are indebted for the felicity of standing to-day in the flesh before you."

"Oh, you can't see them now," groaned Miles. "One's going to tell fortunes, and the other to sing ballads through the city."

"For shame!" cried Maurice, indignantly—he glanced at Alphonse—"Did they escape? The little wretches will come to ruin; they must be looked after in haste."

"Here we are, sir," said Nelly, with a smirk; "shure any honest trade is better than rob or starve."

"O Lord!" ejaculated O'Driscoll, "I didn't know you. Are we going to have private theatricals, Alphonse? Here's my mother and Hussey Burgh, just come in time. Don't you think, Jenny Wren—beg your pardon, Nelly, I believe's your name—it will be nicer to sing for us and tell our fortunes in these nice rooms than in the street?"

Nelly made no reply. In her secret soul, awed and oppressed by such splendour as her young eyes had never before looked on, she was thinking that she and Effie would feel more comfortable after a hard day's work in the streets squatting over a cosy turf fire in a tidy little room, with their bed in a corner, and a chair with a hot cake and raking pot of tea between them, than yoked to pace in fine harness in halls of cumbrous state.

"What's your name, elfin queen?" said Maurice, turning from her stolid face to the more piquant one of her companion, who freely answered:

"Effie O'Byrne."

"My sister; I thought you knew," said Miles, enjoying Maurice's look of astonishment.

"By Jove, I feel as if we were in a pantomime, and I the clown blundering away and floundering to keep my balance on some unsteady footing. What's your name, Nelly, before I commit myself irretrievably?"

Hussey Burgh coming up intercepted Nelly's reply, saying, as he shook hands with Miles and laughed: "I've just met that unlucky wight, Colandisk, limping painfully along with his arm in a sling"—Miles and O'Driscoll glanced significantly at Nelly and Effy, who coloured and smiled with conscious mirth and bashfulness—"Going to dine at Carhampton's? Give you my word, I'm glad I was not persuaded into taking the field against the insurgents; they have left ugly marks upon some of our gallants which they will carry to their grave, serve them right. I really pity the poor devil, he looked so woebegone and out at elbows."

"He is not to be pitied at all," cried Alphonse, turning sharply round. "Had he taken my advice and gone back to his wife, he had not been in such plight. Old Mr. Damer, who died last week left her all his wealth, and she is now engaged to Sardanapalus Pomfret; and Colandisk goes about scolding and whimpering how ill-used he is by the world, and striving to redress his fortune by every unlawful means. Let us reserve our sympathy for more deserving object."

Dinner being announced put an end to the theme, and Don Antonio, giving his arm to Lady O'Driscoll, led the way to the dining-room.

CHAPTER XLIV.

THE CLOUDS GATHER.

"But as he spoke there issued from the crowd
 Innham the base, the cruel, and the proud.
 * * * *

The astonished demons on each other gazed,
 And Satan's self sat silent and amazed."

"'Twas a vile plot! And yet I would my hands were pure as his
 From the deep stains of blood. Did'st hear the sounds
 In the air last night?
 Since the great work of slaughter, who hath not heard them only
 At those hours which should be silent?"

HEMANS.

ON the morning of the day appointed for interview between Lord Castlereagh and his former collegiate associate, Father Fitzpatrick, Don Antonio, Miles O'Byrne, and Maurice O'Driscoll called early on the prisoner, for this was a privilege the open-handed liberality of Don Antonio had secured from the sordid gaolers for the young man's friends, as well as the addition of many comforts to alleviate the rigour of his captivity, and had, in fact, been a golden key that would have blinded the eyes of keepers to his escape, but that other vigilant eyes were upon them of parties whose bloated coffers needed not to be replenished at the cost of foregoing the luxury of persecuting and wreaking spiteful malice upon a Popish priest, as well as carrying out other schemes of policy. Don Antonio and Miles O'Byrne, elate with sanguine anticipations of favourable result to accrue from the audience vouchsafed by the Chief Secretary, accosted their friend with cheerful spirits, but Father Fitzpatrick, apparently not sharing their hopeful prognostics, damped their glowing ardour by a premonitory shake of his head and a dubious sigh of profound significance.

"Hang it, Pat! what ails you?" cried his uncle impatiently; "you look as rueful as if you were going to execution, instead of to get your passport to liberty."

Pluck up, man ! in an hour or two we'll be all quaffing a jolly cup together."

"Don't be too sure of that, my friends," returned Eather Patrick, opening and shutting his breviary with abstracted manner; "I know Castlereagh, and feel more diffident of the issue; but I've seen my confessor this morning, and am prepared for any probable contingency." He looked earnestly at O'Driscoll, who for the last two days, oppressed with a strange mysterious feeling of melancholy he could not shake off or in any way account for, stood passive and silent, leaning against the iron bars of the lattice, the sunlight streaming down upon his head and weaving a golden atmosphere around him.

"Then," cried Don Antonio, with fire in his eye, "what did you bother about obtaining the interview for, if you be so despondent about the result? Why not have let it alone, and taken your chance for a trial?"

The priest smiled, and replied softly: "Did you suppose, uncle, I was only concerned for my individual interest in making such appeal? No; a sense of obligation, imposed by my sacred calling, dictated a higher motive; I must fulfil my mission, and in the discharge of the duty of my ministry I shall have to address this man in terms of speech that, according to human calculation, will not enlist him in the cause of friendship or dispose him in my favour; therefore the only issue I am sanguine of to myself is an inauspicious one. Yet not for this must I prove derelict or falter. How is dear Alphonse, Maurice?"

O'Driscoll, with involuntary start, at the question addressed to himself, replied: "She is well, Patrick; that is, not complaining, though within this day or two she looks a little paler, and her spirits appear to be not so good. I fear she is fretting about you."

"That's foolish," mused Father Patrick; "nothing in this transient world is worth a passing sigh, if poor human nature could but be persuaded of that truth. Miles, have you any tidings of dear Hugh?"

"None whatever, Father Pat, save that I know he and Dwyer, and several other leaders, are yet holding a guerilla warfare through the country that will end in nothing. I

wish I had timely told him of what I had been forewarned myself," he murmured, reverting to the phantom's ominous words in the ruin.

Father Patrick thought a moment, then said: "I know not if it were dream or vision, but as I sat late last night in meditation, it seemed as though a curtain parted before my eyes, and I beheld Hugh standing among a band of pikemen upon a high hill. He was beckoning to me, and while I yet looked, I beheld the whole band, and himself amongst them, struck down by a troop of military, who fired at every man with deliberate aim. Mechanically I raised my hand, and pronounced the words of absolution. Then, as if the curtain closed again, I saw no more, but awake, as I am now, sat pondering the strange occurrence. I think poor Hugh we shall see no more in this life."

"Time's up, yer reverence, an' Major Sirr is waitin' for ye," said the burly gaoler, entering the cell, and intimating that Father Fitzpatrick was to accompany the Town Major to the Chief Secretary's. The friends took leave, embracing, and all parted; Don Antonio, Miles, and Maurice following in a chaise the route of the escort, so as to be ready on the spot to receive and welcome the object of their solicitude when his interview with the potentate had resulted according to the expectation they would persist in cherishing.

"The Robespierre of Ireland," sleek, smooth, and smiling, arrayed yet in silken morning gown and slippers, and lounging in a well-cushioned chair at his ease, perusing the daily journal, extended two begemmed fingers in welcome, as Father Fitzpatrick, delivered from the custody of Major Sirr, passed into that of Claudius Beresford and Lord Carhampton, and was by them ushered into the presence of the Chief Secretary, where he remained standing, while they seated themselves beside another individual, Lord Caslereagh's private secretary, who was writing at a desk convenient.

"Glad to see you, Fitzpatrick," said his lordship, with that oily suavity of accent and bland affability of mien with which the world lacquers its votaries to simulate the golden virtues of benignity; "sorry to hear you got into

trouble about those United Irish rebels. Why did you not sooner appeal to me? But you have a fine opportunity of retaliating now, and showing the knaves that you stand on the side of loyalty with us, and all the supporters and friends of Government. Sit down, and tell me what we can do for you. Is it a pension or an appointment you would prefer?" The wily statesman fixed his cold, sinister eye upon the young man, and shot a furtive glance, which did not escape his observation, at his colleagues.

With collected self-possession, he made reply: "My lord, the boon I ask is simply my liberty. Upon a false charge, by whom preferred I know not, of being a member of the United Irishmen's Society, and without trial to prove it, I have been immured within the walls of Newgate, cut off from the world, and debarred the exercise of my priestly functions. I demand of your justice either immediate enfranchisement or an early trial."

"Then you deny the impeachment charged against you, and are ready and willing to afford us satisfactory evidence of your non-sympathy with rebellion, and your promptitude to co-operate with our measures for the benefit of the State," returned the insidious diplomatist, artfully angling to snare the prey, while the secretary, pen in hand, awaited to note down each successful cast of the line to capture the beguiled victim.

"Lord Castlereagh," answered the priest, and as he spoke he fixed his aspect, and met the gaze of the Chief Secretary with the hard, firm stolidity of one who felt he had encased himself in armour of proof; "it were idle in me to feign ignorance or to profess that I do not fathom the depth and drift of your subtle speech; forbear therefore, the hope to inveigle me in meshes of diplomacy. It is true I deny—not that I condemn, or am ashamed of it, but for the sake of truth—I deny having been in any way connected with the society of United Irishmen, the charge upon which I was arrested; but with the unfortunate people, outraged in their peaceful homes, massacred by thousands without a pretext, goaded and maddened from a state of peaceful submission to seek refuge and respite

in wild fury of rebellion against unnatural tyranny, I sympathise heart and soul, and would hold myself abhorred, as man degraded from all the nobility of divine nature which alone ennobles him as a being in whom every celestial spark of soul was quenched, could I co-operate with your nefarious policy and become the partisan of a Government whose life, like that of the vampire, is nurtured by blood drawn from the heart of my country. But hear me for yourself, Castlereagh; for there is an omen in your darkened brow and clouded eye that tells me we two shall meet no more, that this interview is our last; and not as suppliant, but as prophet armed with divine authority, do I stand before you now to deliver the message with which I am inspired. Castlereagh, you have climbed by miry paths to a giddy pinnacle, but the cry of the afflicted has gone before you; the blood of the persecuted and the tears of the widow and the orphan are loud in the ear of God, saying: 'How long, O Lord, how long!' A gulf is yawning beneath your feet; will you retrace your course before the thunder crashes, and the bolt smites and hurls you into the abyss from whence no aid from sceptred hand of earthly potentate will reach you? No, you will not; you will not cease that derisive laugh. I behold you already straining in your mad career to the last fatal step; I hear the plunge into the gulf of one round whose throat a millstone is hung; I hear a voice choking in blood, crying out amid the hollow murmur of the lost ages of six thousand years; and would, and would that I could see no more!" The priest faltered into silence, great beads of dew oozed out upon his forehead, and he looked as one ready to swoon, till the voice of Claudius Beresford fell upon his ear, saying:

"By Jove! the priest is an adept in his trade; Castlereagh looks like one scared of his wits, and more ready to turn barefooted friar and give his shoulders to the discipline than to grapple with the Jesuit and fling him back to preach to the sinners in Newgate."

Thus taunted, Castlereagh, who certainly looked awed and impressed, roused himself, shook off the incubus of conscience creeping oppressively over him, and said sternly:

"Enough, Fitzpatrick, if you only sought our presence to intimidate with lecture, we are not to be bamboozled by words. If you came seeking our grace, you took the wrong way to it. I can do nothing for you since you demur to give security for your loyal principles."

"No, but flatly disavows his loyalty, and makes vaunt of his sympathy with rebellion," cried Lord Carhampton. "Sirrah, what do you charge rebels for passport to heaven? 'Pon my honour, Beresford, I think a few lashes would be of use to cure his malady."

"I had thought of that, and shall prescribe them," said Claudius Beresford, graciously. "Priest, do ye hear, we are going to make a martyr of you, and put you in the way of a crown of glory. What say? Of course you have no objection."

The priest made response in accents nervous, sonorous, and measured; his brow and cheek were flushed, but in his eye there was an unwavering light, and an expression that told of a spirit in arms, and prepared to enter upon the lists to fight the fight it would never relinquish till the red wreath of victory twined its crown of immortality.

"I count it," he said, "little, if among so many more worthy than I who have suffered and still suffer persecution for justice' sake, I be decreed to give my blood to nurture the flowers of our island garden, and my mother Church, and to commingle my last breath with that of the multitude wafted by the angel of incense to the throne of the Most High in supplication for the land of their love. Would that the strong voice of our united invocation might avail to sound the trumpet of thy resurrection, O Erin! and roll back the stone of oppression from the sepulchre that binds thee in trance and darkness, extinct and voiceless among the nations."

"Verily, thou'rt a great fool for thy pains," said Castle-reagh, who, in spite of himself, was struck with wonder and admiration of the lofty character before him, whom he could not refrain from viewing as something of a phenomenon or solecism among the *genus homo*, so utterly did he contrast with all among those of his association and experience. "With what guerdon will the country requite

the quixotic chivalry that befooled thee to sacrifice life and fortune in its barren service? Be wise, young man, take my friendly admonition, retract your vain-glorious braggadocio of hostility to the Government, and give us such guarantee for your good faith and loyal principles as may justify the good intentions prompted by my friendship for you."

"My lord," responded the priest, in expostulatory tone, "your friendship, selfish and self-interested, would traffic with me for the barter of my immortal soul. Contrariwise my charity for you is such, that were it granted me to burst the cerements of the grave, and return from the spirit world, again would I rise to stand between you and destruction, to tear you from the jaws of ruin. Farewell; I plead in vain!"

"Farewell; I'm sorry I can do nothing for you," coldly returned Lord Castlereagh; and escorted by Claudius Beresford, Father Fitzpatrick withdrew, to be again transferred to the custody of Major Sirr and his staff. Don Antonio, Miles, and Maurice, who waited to greet the emancipated prisoner, pushing through the crowd of military and officials, were astonished and dismayed to find themselves rudely repulsed from approaching their friend, who, seeing them, waved his hand in adieu, while after a few whispered words with Claudius Beresford, Major Sirr's carriage with its occupants drove off, not to Newgate, but towards Drumcondra. Beresford himself, stepping into an elegant chariot, immediately after pursued the same route, while Don Antonio and the others, lost in conjecture, continued gazing after the vehicles. A burly master-sweep, with two sooty little appendages at his heels, who had come out of the lodge encumbered with all the paraphernalia of his trade, bags and brushes, withdrew a small pipe from his mouth as Beresford's equipage flashed by, and shouted into the ear of its proprietor: "You've had your turn; it'll be mine next, Mr. Beresford." And replacing the *dudeen* between his grimy lips, he sucked in the aromatic fumes with an expression of enjoying the delectable luxury which at any other time would have greatly interested the party surveying him. As

it was, they only stared in blank silence ; while the sweep, diving his hands in his fob-pockets, resumed between puffs, addressing the group generally :

"If there's a rascal in the world"—puff, puff—"it's that scoundrel, Beresford ; not but what there's a kishful of 'em. He scored five hundred on my back, in the Marlborough Riding School, for no rhyme nor reason, but on the false accusation of some lying knave ; but if I don't score my name agin him in the election that's comin' on, an' put him out o' the House, my name isn't Horish"—puff, puff, puff. "Is the prisoner a frind o' yours, sir ?"

"He's my nephew, poor boy ; and I don't know what they are about now," said Don Antonio, anxiously.

Puff, puff. "A priest I take it, sir, by his look ?"

"Yes," said Miles. "I wonder what they are going to do with him. Hadn't we better go on to Newgate and see ?"

"Take my word for it, sir"—puff—"they arn't bringing him to Newgate." Puff, puff—"Didn't ye see Beresford's carriage dhrivin' afther 'em, an' he an' the major *cosh*in together ? They're on some devil's business of their own."

"Let them do their best, they can prove no guilt against the prisoner," said O'Driscoll.

Horish gave a dry laugh. "Whin wor ye weaned, sir ? Ain't he a priest, an' ain't Mr. Beresford an' Major Sirr judge an' jury enough to make white black, an' sind black to be dyed red, widout any appeal from the verdict ?"

"Then you think he'll be flogged ?" cried Don Antonio, hastily.

"An' well if he get off lightly wid five hundred," said the sweep, with a shrewd wink. "An' that's why they're smugglin' him out o' the way, lest there'd be a riot, as in coorse there would, if the people come to know it."

"Let us return with speed," cried Don Antonio, "and call on Egan and Hussey Burgh, and rouse our friends to see what can be done in the case."

Acting on the suggestion, all set off at a brisk pace, followed by Horish and his satellites, their first care being to call at Don Antonio's, to break gently the disappoint-

ment to Alphonse, who, they knew, awaited their return in a fever of expectation.

Maurice, first to enter the drawingroom, where Effie was standing at a table putting together the parts of a puzzle, gazed in silent dismay, as Alphonse, rising from a sofa on which she had been reclining, came forward with strange similitude of a smile flickering upon a pallid face, to welcome him and hear his tidings.

"Alphonse, dear, what ails you?" cried the young man, excitedly, as she placed her hand in his. "You are not yourself, you are ill. Won't you tell me, dearest?"

She attempted a reassuring laugh. "I do not, indeed, feel well, Maurice; but it is only some little passing indisposition, I dare say, which won't signify. What news of Patrick?"

"Nothing decided for a few days more," said Maurice, evasively, as Miles and Don Antonio came in.

"Why, Alphonse, what's the matter with you?" exclaimed Don Antonio, looking at his niece. "You have heard no bad news, have you?"

"No, uncle, not any; I just feel out of sorts a little."

"Out of sorts! you are the colour of death, child. What happened you?" and he glanced at Effie, who, feeling herself called upon, said:

"Lady Alicia came again to-day to luncheon, and teased her to lend her diamonds."

"I hope you didn't," said Don Antonio. "You would never get them back."

"No, unole, I told her you would not be pleased."

"And then," blurted out Effie, "she said sure you need never know it, if Alphonse wasn't such a fool as to tell you; and when she found she could not get them, she asked for a loan of the pearl ornaments Lady O'Driscoll gave her; and though Alphonse refused, she went up to the dressing-room herself to get them, but Nelly and I ran before her, and hid them. So she went away as cross as a cat that had lost a mouse."

"How impertinent!" cried Don Antonio, testily. "I wonder, Alphonse, you encourage that woman, whom I dislike so much."

"I don't encourage her, uncle," said Alphonse, and she shivered. "I wish she would not come; I am afraid of her; there is something in her eyes that frightens me; but it's no use to deny myself, she comes up all the same."

Don Antonio paused, at his wit's end. "But, dear, that need not have made you ill," expostulated Maurice. "I thought you had more spirit."

Effie suddenly cried: "I know what it is now. It's the French *bon-bons* Lady Alicia gave her some of, and when she went Alphonse gave a few to me, and I shared mine with Nelly. They were very nice to eat, but we were both sick, and had such a nasty taste on our mouth after. We did nothing but drink water for two days."

"Oh, yes, I think that must be it; I had forgotten it," articulated Alphonse, with faint voice. "I am glad to know it, for I had feared I was getting fever." And she wearily closed her glassy eyes, and leaned her head upon Maurice's shoulder.

"Don Antonio, send at once for a physician," said Miles, going himself over to ring the bell, which a servant promptly answered.

"Send for Doctor Adrians," cried Don Antonio, in alarm, as Alphonse sunk fainting down, and Maurice bore her to the sofa, while Miles ran to fetch a glass of water, and Effie flew down for Nelly, who was in the housekeeper's room, learning to make jelly and tarts.

All was confusion and distress, for Alphonse did not soon revive; and in the midst the physician arrived, felt the patient's pulse, examined her tongue, asked some questions, shook his head gravely, and turning to Don Antonio, pronounced the one ominous word: "Poison!"

"Is she beyond hope?" demanded Don Antonio, with the desperate composure of one confronting an evil from whence there is no escape; while Maurice, like a stone petrification, mute and rigid, awaited the response.]

"I fear so. I should have been called in earlier; the virus has worked into the system. It is a grave case—very. Meanwhile, we shall do our best while there is life. Let the patient be put to bed, and kept quiet, while I order a prescription."

CHAPTER XLV.

THE THUNDER BURSTS.

"But now estranged, divorc'd for ever,
 Far as the grasp of fate can sever;
 Our only ties what love has wove
 In faith, friends, country sunder'd wide;
 And then, then only, true to love,
 When false to all that's dear beside."

FIRE WORSHIPPERS.

"Tis e'en so!

The parting soul doth gather all her fires around her,
 All her glorious hopes, and dreams, and burning aspirations,
 To illumine the shadowy dimness of the untrodden path
 Which lies before her; and, encircled thus,
 Awhile she sits in dying eyes, and thence
 Sends forth her bright farewells."

HEMANS.

WHILE confusion and dismay prevailed in the mansion of Don Antonio MacMahon, and Maurice, distracted, ran to fetch his mother, and Don Antonio sent for a clergyman; and Effie and Nelly, believing themselves involved in the fate of Alphonse, and ready to give up the ghost—a fate from which their more vigorous constitution and smaller participation in the sweetmeats saved them—greedily swallowed doses of physic, and dolefully prepared for their end; and Alphonse, partially restored by strong stimulants and antidotes, got short snatches of uneasy rest, and betimes showed symptoms of delirium, and raved at intervals, Miles, the only one who had not forgotten Father Fitzpatrick, and his urgent need of a patron in this hour of trial, to shield him from the power of his enemies, be-thought of Florence Esmonde, and without a moment's delay, snatching up his hat, he hurried off to Harcourt-street, to see and engage her to interest her brothers and friends in favour of the defenceless prisoner. Shaken from his centre by the scene he had just witnessed, deploring the sudden calamity that had befallen his friends with one fell stroke, smiting at once so many, and wondering could it indeed have been through the medium of the *bon-bons*, or by any other yet unascertained agency, Alphonse

had unconsciously swallowed the baneful infusion—for an idea that the event was more than accidental catastrophe had not as yet possessed any mind, and none would countenance the idea of a fatal termination to it—he arrived at the house and was ushered into the drawingroom, where he waited some time, impatiently, before the door opened, and entered, not Florence, but Marmion Esmond, with his brother Percy. With haughty formality each bowed to Miles, who, retaining a sense of the mission on which he had come, and willing to conciliate those whom he anticipated would ere long stand in nearer relationship to him, courteously returned the greeting, and said: “I am glad to see you, my friends, for though I had asked for Miss Esmond, you are more to my present purpose, since I have need to sue your favour in a case of deep emergency, confident that I shall not appeal in vain to the generous magnanimity of your nature, and the potency of your influential interest to confer the boon I crave.”

“Sir,” loftily returned Marmion Esmond, “any boon compatible with our honour, dignity, and social status, we shall be happy, if in our power, to accord to your suit; but, before you proceed further, having an inkling of its nature from my sister, Miss Esmond, who no later than yesterday surprised us by stating that you, presumptuously aspiring to her hand, had so far forgotten our relative positions as to propose for an alliance with our family—now, sir, if you give your good sense fair play, upon cool reflection you must admit that any connexion between our wealthy and aristocratic family, and an impoverished Popish family, many of whose members—yourself not least conspicuously—have signalised themselves as standard-bearers in the van of insurrection—would be derogatory and obnoxious to the last degree, and shall never have our consent or sanction.”

“Captain Esmond,” responded Miles, throwing back his stately figure, and fixing upon the other an austere aspect, beneath whose strong expression of concentrated scorn and majestic dignity he appeared to dwindle and shrink away, “I thank you for the opportunity you have

given me of acquainting you with your own antecedents, and the light in which I and my family regard you and yours. Far other theme had I come hither this day to broach, but since you have coerced me into another subject, and flung in my face a gauntlet, I take it up, and thus retort your audacious challenge:—Marmion Esmond, in the year 1625* my family was in possession of the extensive territorial possessions of its ancestors, which had been restored by letters patent from Elizabeth and James I. Lord Esmond, your progenitor, an unjust and rapacious invader, confederated with Sir Richard Graham, Sir William Parsons, and, I regret to add, Sir Piers Fitzgerald, by fraud, violence, and suborning false witnesses, to wrest from us and partition among them our fathers' heritage from immemorial time. They succeeded in their nefarious scheme of plunder, and several members of our ruined family migrated to France, where they served in the brigades, among them, my grandfather; while others of them, who yet clung to fatherland, engaged in various commercial pursuits, and in time acquired, despite penal restrictions on Catholic industry and enterprise, wealth and honour, the remnant of the once princely heritage of Fiech Mac Aodh, the last of the independent Wicklow toparchs, our forefather, being now vested in the hands of Robert Byrne of Cabinteely, whose kinsman I stand here to demand restitution of that usurped property of ours, upon which, pluming your nakedness with stolen feathers, you arrogantly claim as yours that to which you are a false pretender; and to make bold assertion to your teeth that I, Miles O'Byrne, your equal—nay more, your peer—honours you by offer of an alliance more noble might not decline. Let me see Miss Esmond, whose pleasure I consult, not yours; the question rests between us alone to settle."

"The grand vizier has spoken," said Marmion Esmond, bowing low in mockery, and, addressing his brother: "Let Miss Esmond come, and hear from the lips of her natural guardians and protectors what she must have to expect if she will persist in the mad whim of degrading her family,

* Carte's "Life of Ormonde," published 1735-6.

and uniting herself with an Irish fortune-hunter, whose highest boast is that he is come of a very ancient savage pedigree, and that the wild glebe they once tilled has passed into better hands."

Percy went, and soon returned with Florence, pale and subdued. Miles, intercepting Marmion, stepped between, and took her hand.

"You loved me, Florence, you said?" he cried, looking earnestly into the depth of her clear, dewy eyes.

"Yes, Miles," she faltered; "I have disclosed, as you wished, to my friends our mutual attachment."

"You did well. Now, say, dearest, what was the one object which I told you alone disputed pre-eminence with even your dear love for empire of my bosom?" She blushed, and was silent. He raised himself, and accosted Marmion: "When the tempter suggested that ours should be a clandestine love, secured by secret flight, the voice of honour spoke aloud to my heart, and bade me spurn the unworthy act. That same voice again issues its imperious mandate, which I cannot choose but obey, the while it sounds the knell of my doom. Florence, I loved, I love, shall ever love you! And had not fate stepped between, methinks ours had been a happy wedded love; but the dream, like every dream of my life, is broken." She fixed her eyes pensively on his storm-tossed countenance, while passionately he proceeded: "Had you been a dowerless maid, wooed and won, not in Percy's nor in Marmion's power had it been to sunder from my hand the treasure I would have yielded only with my life. But never, never shall it be theirs to say that Miles O'Byrne, an Irish fortune-hunter, a Popish rebel, carried off their wealthy sister to mend his fortune with her gold. Farewell, sweet Florence, best of your race!—farewell, and pray for the plundered pariah, whose rejected friendship might yet be estimated at cost more precious than the dross against which it was weighed."

"Stay!—oh, stay! Come back, oh, Miles!" screamed Florence, waking from her bewildered trance, and flying to the door in pursuit of the wildly-retreating Miles. Marmion threw himself between them.

"Back, Florence!—back! By Jove! I didn't think the fellow had so much spirit. So much the better for yourself. Listen, girl, once more to what I tell you had been the sequel of your flighty conduct: expulsion from your family, opprobrium, degradation, poverty; for think not we would have suffered without litigation your money to go into such hands, whom, probably, the end would see transported for a swindler, and yourself locked up in an asylum as one demented. There, do as all young ladies do, baulked of their first love—play the tragedy-queen, sigh, and shed sentimental tears. Here's Ethel come to comfort you. Come, Percy, let us be off; Carhampton awaits us at the Castle."

There are natures, soft, warm, impressionable, whose inflammatory emotions, kindled by sharp friction of pain, explode like a rocket or a magazine into which a spark has fallen, and subside in sullen gloom amid the heart-wreck they have wrought over the grave of their blighted hopes and extinguished life-lights. Florence Esmond did not belong to this class; she was rather one of those who might be compared to a lofty tower riven by a thunderbolt to its very foundation, yet which proudly stands the shock, which, nevertheless, as surely dooms it to desolation and decay, gradual and irreparable. As one frozen and congealed she sat, mute, tearless, listening to Ethel's entreaties to speak and tell her what had happened, with dull, cold ear, still thinking over and over to herself the one thought: "I loved him so truly, and he is gone, gone for ever! I know him; and Marmion and Percy have wrought this woe!" And in this train she mused on, while the object of her thoughts, chafing with the memory of Esmond's galling taunts and rebuff, fiercely wrestling with the agony of his spirit, and priding himself upon his Spartan manhood that could, with unrelenting hand, dash the cup of bliss from his own lip, paced along with lordly strides, looking to neither right nor left, but vainly striving to banish from his mind the image of Florence Esmond, and replace it with a crowd of other occupants. He arrived at Don Antonio's residence, just as O'Driscoll had preceded him, anxious and miserable, with a new care weighing

upon his heart. His mother, whose health had been long ailing, too hastily apprised of Alphonse's condition, had fallen into one of her swooning fits, and though better when he left her, had to retire to her room, to which he feared she would be some time confined; and then hastily he inquired of the servant about Miss Fitzpatrick. The menial replied that there was no perceptible improvement; that another doctor had been called in, and the two were then with Don Antonio in the drawingroom. Miles and O'Driscoll went up, to find Effie and Nelly hanging about the lobby to waylay the physicians as they came forth, for an opinion upon their own case; and as the two gentlemen entered the drawingroom, they followed without ceremony, eager to make known some nondescript symptoms that troubled them to the men of lore. Don Antonio's face, as Miles and O'Driscoll conceived, did not express an air of much satisfaction; nor did the physicians, when questioned as to their hopes of the patient, give very definite opinion. One shrugged his shoulders and said:

"She has youth on her side, and an unimpaired constitution. We hope the best."

The other added: "Whatever the faculty has prescribed in such cases we have administered, but it was a serious mistake not to have called in advice immediately upon symptoms supervening the swallowing of the *bonbons*."

"Then you believe it was the *bonbons* caused her illness?" said Miles.

"Undoubtedly; I have known many children poisoned by eating those noxious compounds of plaster, and arsenic, and other deleterious colouring stuff and ingredients."

"Sir, do you think we'll die?" exclaimed Effie, whose terror broke loose and defied all control. "We ate a lot of them, Nelly and I."

"I see nothing to indicate such casualty, my dear; but if you wish, I'll order you emetics," smiled Doctor Adrien. "Meanwhile, sir"—he turned to Don Antonio as he left the room—"remember, above all things, the patient is to be kept quiet and free from excitement till the feverish symptoms are abated, and we can, after neutralizing the effects of the drug, get up her exhausted strength."

They departed ; and for the rest of the day a pin might have been heard to fall in the house. Don Antonio, in his anxiety for Alphonse, merging solicitude for his nephew, deputed Miles and Maurice to find where he had been conveyed, and do what they could in his behalf, while he himself sat down to write to various parties whose interest he hoped might be of avail in the young man's case. Early the following day O'Driscoll, accompanied by Miles, who met him by appointment, hastened to make inquiries about the invalid. Upon being told she passed a restless night, but was now a little more composed, as the doctors expected, they went up stairs, and met Effie on the landing, who whispered :

"Lady Alicia's just come ; she's in the drawingroom, and wanted to go up to Alphonse, but I told her she couldn't, that Don Antonio and the nurse was with her, and the doctors coming."

"My dear Maurice," cried the lady, coming to the door as they entered, and her look expressed so much feeling that O'Driscoll, rescinding former impressions, thought : "Well, you are a generous, noble-hearted creature, and I was mistaken in my contrary opinion." "Poor darling Alphonse ! Only this morning I heard she was so ill, and came off at once to see her. What do the doctors say ? My poor fellow !"

"We must wait till we hear what they say to-day. She has had a bad night," said Maurice, with a choking in his throat. "Of course we hope the best."

"Poor dear, of course you do. Sweet Alphonse !"

"It was the *bonbons* you gave her, Lady Alicia," said Miles, "that sickened her."

"Sir, what do you mean to insinuate ?" screamed Lady Alicia, with brow of thunder, and lightning in her eyes. "Do you dare to say the *bonbons* contained poison, and that I wilfully conspired against Miss Fitzpatrick's life ?"

"I did not use the words poison or life," calmly replied Miles. "I merely said the *bonbons* sickened her."

"Beware what you say, sir. I am not one to be assailed with impunity ; and I have friends powerful and prompt to do my behest and redress my grievance," retorted the

lady, with the hissing tone and vindictive aspect of an envenomed snake about to dart its fangs. So terrible was the effect of her speech, and gesture of rage and alarm, that for the first time an awful suspicion, that was almost conviction, flashed into the soul of O'Driscoll, and shuddering he recoiled from the touch of her cold, fishy hand, as one electrified by contact with a torpedo; while, grasping his, she continued, in agitated strain: "Would you believe me capable of it—of anything so base? O'Byrne, you wicked wretch!"

"My dear Lady Alicia, compose yourself," cried Maurice, soothingly. "My friend Miles has said nothing absolutely that could be construed into the smallest offence. I might myself be open to the reproof, innocently, of giving sweetmeats to some one that disagreed."

"But who said the *bonbons* were poisoned, and that I gave them to her?" said Lady Alicia, now weeping hysterically upon Maurice's shoulder.

"The doctor said they were poisoned. Where did you get them, and have you any more?"

"Then the doctor is a liar, and he is in the plot against me. They came to me from France; I have eaten of them myself. Oh, cruel, cruel Maurice! to hear such a charge, and not knock down the traducer;—but I will deal with him."

"Suppose they were poisoned; you might not have known it," said Maurice. "You make too much of it."

"Oh, Maurice, you are a dear fellow to try and comfort me so. I don't believe they were poisoned; but, if it so happened, I would lie down and die at your feet for my unlucky hand in the accident. But is she so ill? Is she beyond hope? What does the doctor say? I was just going to ask was it fever, or any contagious disorder, when I was interrupted; and I would go up now to see her, but that little girl told me Don Antonio was with her. Won't you tell me how she is? You said she had a bad night?"

"So I heard, Lady Alicia; but she is more tranquil to-day," said Maurice, "and I hope the best."

"To be sure; I declare I feel so relieved. What gave her the bad night, do you think? Maybe some one incautiously told her about her brother the priest, and that may have disquieted her, poor thing."

"No. What! do you know anything of him? We have been trying to make him out, Miles and I," said O'Driscoll, eagerly.

"Oh, don't you know?—if not, perhaps I should not tell you?"

"Yes, yes, pray tell us; a murderous certainty is better than torturing suspense."

"He is dead, unhappy man; refused to answer all questions put to him, and died in Beresford's Mews, at Drumcondra, last night;—so Claudius told my uncle. Don't say a word of it to poor Alphonse. Oh, by-the-bye, Maurice, I want you to do me a favour; I am going on Monday next to Lady Aldborough's rout, and you know I'd like to look my best. Would you coax dear Alphonse to lend me the pearl suit your mother gave her? I'd prefer a loan of her uncle's diamonds, and if I asked him myself I'm sure he'd oblige me; but his manner is so stiff and unpleasant it repels one; so I must be content with the pearls just for one night. Effie will take your message and run up and get them for me."

"Alphonse is to be kept quiet, the doctor says, and we couldn't tease her for them now," cried Effie, looking at Maurice, who replied:

"There's time enough yet between this and Monday, Lady Alicia; she cannot be disturbed now. And so they have murdered poor Fitzpatrick?"

"Oh, you know he was a United Irishman; they couldn't help it; the country must be pacified. Of course it is very sad, and we are all so sorry; but couldn't Effie run up and get the jewels quietly; Alphonse need know nothing of it, they'll be back before she wants them, and I'd like to see what dress would best suit them."

"I couldn't do it, Lady Alicia," returned Maurice, in tone more hard and firm than ever she had heard from him. "Excuse me if I go: I hear the doctor's carriage. Come, Miles."

"Then I may go," sighed Lady Alicia, "and as I drive through town on my return, I'll call to hear the news. Effie, would you like a drive in the carriage?"

"No, I would not," bluntly responded Effie, yet rueing the bitter memory of *bonbons* and emetics.

"Wouldn't you like, dear, to go to see your old friends, the Misses Hodgenses? I'll take you, if you wish, there."

"No, thank you, I don't care at all to see the Miss Hodgenses;" and Effie decamped from the saloon, while Lady Alicia made her way, unattended, to the hall-door.

"Maurice," said Miles, as they waited in the dining-room the return of the doctor, and saw her step into her chariot, "avoid that woman; there's a fiend in her eye; woe betide the man that shall call her wife," and with a pang at his heart he dashed away a tear that had sprung to his eye, and turned to scan the backs of the books in a glass-case beside him.

Two hours later, Florence Esmond, yielding to the persuasion of her cousin, Ethel Courtney, ordered the jaunting-car, and mournfully apathetic, accompanied her to pay a visit to Alphonse, of whose illness they had not even heard. As they drew up before the house, Ethel uttered an exclamation, and Florence a moment abstracted from her sorrow, fixed a gaze of surprise upon the shrouded windows.

"Someone is dead; it must be Don Antonio," cried Ethel. They descended from the car and knocked at the door; a servant opened it, and bursting into tears murmured:

"She's just gone half an hour, Miss."

"Who?" cried Florence, pushing her way into the parlour, while Ethel ran up stairs.

"Poor Alphonse," said Miles, dejectedly, coming forward, leading her in by the hand and closing the door. "Poor Alphonse is dead; I'm glad you've come, Florence."

"Alphonse dead!" exclaimed Florence, forgetting every other thought, and fainted way.

CHAPTER XLVI.

THE EMIGRANTS.

“Now dimm’d and gone
 Each star of hope that cheer’d him on,
 His glories lost—his cause betray’d—
 He saw his dear lov’d country made
 A land of carcasses and slaves,
 One dreary waste of chains and graves.”

FIRE WORSHIPPERS.

“I AM glad you came, dear Florence,” were the reiterated words addressed by Miles O’Byrne to Florence Esmond, as, recovered from her brief lapse of consciousness, she sat beside him on the sofa, her hand in his, her eyes bent downward, her countenance expressing contending emotions of dismay and pity for the fate of Alphonse, and reviving hope for her own destiny. “I am glad,” he repeated, “to see you once more, for not such as the past would I that our parting were——”

“But must we part, Miles?” she hastily interrupted. “I have given you my love, which shall never be recalled. I have pledged you my faith which it is not in any power save yours to sever. Whate’er may be your lot in life, for weal or woe, I am content and strong to share with you.”

“Dear Florence,” he returned, deeply moved, “urge no more. I appeal to that self-same love and devotion of yours, and ask would you, could you, noble in every sentiment as you are, ask me to forego my own self-respect, to forfeit my own self-esteem by act so unworthy? You know the undisguised opinions and prejudices of your family. What hope of domestic concord should bless our ill-starred union, could I brook, fiery as I am of soul, the insult, scorn, and contumely of your haughty brothers and their friends? I fear not a drawn sword, which not

the voice of an angel of peace might bid be sheathed, would rule and ensanguine our house. Yet more, granted I were magnanimous enough to rise superior to myself and pass by Marmion's hate and Percy's sneer, or poltroon enough to sneak away and hide from their wrath, what manner of mind or heart should animate my nature, to behold, unmoved and unremorseful, Florence, beautiful and good, the star of her sphere, and the cynosure of every eye, dragged down by my hand from the highest state, her birthright, disowned by her brothers, forsaken by her friends, plunged into obscurity, and all for no other guerdon than that of my fatal love, which, without dooming such infliction, may yet and for ever be hers?" He drew from his bosom the ring she had given him, and which was attached by a little chain to his crucifix. "You remember this token, dearest? I am not going to return it, for though while I release you, Florence, from your pledge to ally with my destiny, this little amulet shall ever rest upon my bosom, closing the door of my heart, and guarding, inaccessible to every other object, the empty niche consecrated to its sole idol, my lost Florence." He kissed her hand and rose quickly, warned by an approaching step at the door; it opened, and Ethel entered with streaming eyes, accompanied by Effie, sobbing as if her heart would break, and Don Antonio, looking like a statue of solemnity cast in bronze. Silently he shook hands with Florence, standing in awe-struck horror, a picture of speechless woe.

"Where's O'Driscoll?" said Miles, addressing M'Mahon, who answered, in hollow tone :

"Gone home ; just got word that his mother was found dead, sitting in her bedroom—disease of the heart. Poor fellow."

"Any commands, sir?" cried a servant-man, noiselessly opening the door. "I'm going through town."

"Commands!" re-echoed Don Antonio, looking perplexed and preoccupied. "Yes; wait;—stay, you are going to give directions to the undertaker; have you got my note? You might as well bid an auctioneer come up with a valuator to take the furniture, and call on Jefferies,

the landlord, to come over this evening till I settle about the rent; that will do—go.”

“What are you going to do, Don Antonio?” said Miles, who began to think that the old man, crazed by affliction, was issuing incoherent orders, and was not quite cognisant of his acts.

“What am I going to do?” mildly returned Don Antonio, but with firmness of look and tone that left no doubt of his perfect competency to govern his affairs. “I am going once again to fly with speed from this land of desolation, where I have suffered wreck and loss of all that was dear to my bosom—my brave boy Patrick, my murdered Alphonse, and my grandchild, sole offspring of my only daughter, whom in evil hour I beguiled from her widowed father’s arms to accompany me on this ill-fated voyage to perish with our vessel on the coast.” He wrung his hands and moaned aloud: “For your sakes, Patrick and Alphonse, whose duteous love comforted my soul, and whom I had looked to be the staff of my declining years, I had consented to make again my home in my fatherland, having no other ties to bind me to my foreign associations, my son-in-law having formed for himself other connexions indifferent to me; and now, lo! behold the sequel.”

“But Alphonse murdered, you said, Don Antonio?” exclaimed Ethel Courtney, with starting eyes. “What mean you?”

“Though the last word my child spoke, with O’Driscoll’s hand and mine locked in hers, was: ‘Forgive her and let her live to repent,’ I will lift my voice and let it resound to the ear of the murderess, whose name, for sake of the promise extorted by our lost one, shall not be spoken. Alphonse died of the poisoned sweets offered by her hand.”

Florence and Ethel simultaneously uttered a cry and clasped theirs.

“Yes,” said Miles, “in friendship’s guise, sweetmeats were given to the victim; some, we have now ascertained, were harmless; some slightly tinctured with deleterious mixture. But *one* was prepared with distinct ingredient sufficient to accomplish the end, and that one the unsuspecting Alphonse ate.”

He hurried forth, overcome by a burst of emotion, and Don Antonio, conducting the stupefied ladies to the hall-door, quietly opened and closed it upon their exit.

On the morning of the third day after their decease, two funeral corteges swept in long mournful procession through the streets of Dublin, and two mortal tenements were committed to return dust to dust, and sleep their long quiet sleep till the trumpet of the angel shall sound the morning call for the dead to fling off their blanket of clay, lift their pillowed head from the tomb, and bound, thrilling with new life, ethereal and vigorous in perennial beauty, into the light of a day whose sun shall never set, and remoulded in flesh not annealed from dust or elements of earth, but in the subtile essence of divinity, resplendent and immortal.

Don Antonio, O'Driscoll, and Miles O'Byrne, having paid the last sad duties to those so dear to them, returned, disconsolate and silent, to the house of Don Antonio; for he had entreated that, as this was his last day in Dublin, and that on the morrow he embarked for South America, they might spend it together. Upon arriving at the mansion, Miles was surprised to hear that Captain Courtney, Percy Esmond and Miss Esmond, awaited him in the drawingroom.

"Come with me, for heaven's sake; I have not nerve now to meet them alone," said he, addressing his companions. They entered, and before they could observe more than that Florence, Effie, and Nelly, were grouped apart, Percy Esmond, looking excited and eager, stepped forward, crying:

"Miles, we had been to your lodgings to seek you, and were directed here. What frenzy impelled you to impeach Lady Alicia Luttrell with poisoning Miss Fitzpatrick? I can tell you, you are in jeopardy. Carhampton has taken it up; Colandisk is clamorous for your blood. They and Beresford, with Norbury and Major Sirr, were met in consultation how to dispose of you this morning without giving you opportunity to defend yourself, or to repeat what they term your libellous slander and defamation of Lady Alicia. What will you do? Unless you

fly at once, within this hour, I would not ensure your life till nightfall for a groat. You know the men with whom you have to deal. Secret assassination or judicial murder is all that you have to expect, and that immediate!"

"Yes, dear Miles, it is too true. I came myself lest you might too lightly disregard Percy's admonition," cried Florence, earnestly. "You must fly at once; it is Florence Esmond exhorts, entreats you. There is no time to lose."

"Stir up, Miles!—look alive!" cried Don Antonio. "Put your traps together and go on board the emigrant vessel in which I have taken my passage. There are a few berths to be had yet. Take three for yourself, and Effie, and Nelly."

"And one for me, too," chimed in O'Driscoll, gloomily composed, "with accommodation for Tippoo Saib and Bourbon. Stay, I'll accompany you to the quay."

"Nonsense! What are you going for?" cried Percy Esmond, compassionately gazing upon the haggard visage of his friend. "We are all sorry for you, old fellow; and there's better luck in store for you. After all, a wife far gone in decline, as we hear poor Alphonse was, you would have had but a short lease of; and Lady Alicia, who is dying for love of you, has plumed up again with new hope, and exultingly whispers up and down that now there is no rival to balk her, you are hers for ever."

"She deceives herself!" was the curt rejoinder of the desponding young man, as he took up his hat. "Come on, Miles."

"Hoity-toity! was there ever such a complication of cross purposes and refractory spirits?" exclaimed Captain Courtney, now throwing himself into the *melee*. "A young lady in decline dies, and emigration on a large scale must be the sequel! Don Antonio takes ship for the western hemisphere; Miles O'Byrne must fly for his life for some word dropped in folly on a spiteful woman's ear; and O'Driscoll must cut and run because Cupid threatens with his bow and dart. Can't you all settle down, like sensible men, and think it over. If O'Driscoll doesn't choose to surrender himself thrall to Lady Alicia,

to my own knowledge there's twenty other ladies won't say him nay; and, as for you, Miles, all you need do to get out of the scrape is to go to church, marry Florence, tack yourself to the winning party (the Government), go in for a good appointment, and snap your fingers at the mongrel tribe who, having no root in the land by right of ancestry, as you and I have, would sell the clay that covers their father's bones for less than its weight in dross, and stake their reversion of heaven at the gaming-table. Be wise, man! you have precedent in your kinsman, George Byrne, of Cabinteely, a prudent, sensible man; who, sooner than see his fine estate sequestered for a quibble, conformed to the State Church."

"And threw up the Apostolic one," laughed Miles, scornfully.

"Let me say on.—Showed himself one day in church at Monkstown, where the event so notable you may see blazoned on marble——"

"Testifying to the edification of his example," sneered Miles.

"To the triumph, sir, of our having made a convert of such notability; unlike his son Robert, who, shouldered up, no doubt, by his friends—Grattan, Connolly of Castle-town, and his kinsmen, Blackney of Balleillon, Wyse of The Manor, and the Devereuxes—rather than consult his own interest, and vote for the Union. I can tell you, Government made him handsome offers through Castle-reagh for his support of the measure——"

"The destruction of his country."

"No, sir, the good of the country. Well, he stubbornly refused, as you know, as the world knows, all terms."

"Was this why the pikes were hidden in his demesne of Cabinteely?"

"I know nothing about that transaction. The Sham Squire, who knew of Byrne's disaffection to the Union, and that he was hence in no favour with the Government, very likely thought it a good opportunity to help the Government to get rid of him."

"Then we should have had Higgins and Co., under Castlereagh's patronage, lording it in the last remnant left

of our ancient heritage, but for the influential interposition of Judge Day with the Viceroy, and his disclosure of the villainy."

"Well, to what end? Bob Byrne, who might have defied them, and held his head higher than the best, by just giving the tips of his fingers to the Government's outstretched hand, dashed the whole thing, and flies like a hunted hare to pine an exiled man in Buenos Ayres, with his wife and three little girls. Come, Miles, my good fellow, have more common sense; change your tactics, and steer with the wind that blows, for the Union will be carried with or without you. Dame Fortune is just now disposed to be amicable in your regard; catch her by the skirt, come in along with your friends to the Castle, where pensions and peerages are at discount for votes, and any amount of patronage you go in for. Why do you shake your head and laugh?"

"I can't help but laugh to think of the *entourage* of patented nobility with which our ancient pedigree should be confounded—certainly not such as can boast in heraldic page to honour well won in field of chivalry. Some I could name, you know them yourself—peers and peeresses, save the mark!—with whom I would prefer to have no association."

"Pish!—hang it, what a cynic you are. Then here's my hand, and the hand of Florence Esmond, together, and Percy smiling fair approbation for himself and Marmion by proxy on the transaction. Come."

"Don't tempt me beyond my strength to a gulf I see yawning beneath my feet," said Miles, with a wrung bosom. "I am not prepared to pay the cost at which the treasure may be mine. Oh! Florence, Florence." He broke down and sobbed.

There was a loud knock at the front-door.

"'Tis Major Sirr and an officer!" cried Effie, in alarm, as she peeped out under a corner of the blind. "What brings him now?"

"Fly, Miles! oh, fly!" cried Florence. They clasped in last farewell.

"Get out by the coach-house," said Don Antonio,

hastening to warn the servants. "Go on board at once, and I'll follow by-and-by with the children."

"Take your berth, Miles, under an assumed name, as so shall I also," whispered O'Driscoll, as they made off together. "We are in a hunter's net, and it behoves us to move with caution."

So down to the quay they passed, unobstructed, while Major Sirr, seated at wine with Don Antonio and the visitors, blandly asking for Miles O'Byrne, of whom he wanted to make inquiries concerning a boy who had been in his employment, was gravely informed by Captain Courtney that he had just taken the coach to Wexford with a friend, but that he intended to ask him to dine on his return in a day or two, and that if the Major would join them he would confer much pleasure on all parties: to which proposal the Major graciously assented, nothing in doubt of killing two birds with one stone; then added: "I suppose he is gone to make inquiries about his insurgent brother, who was shot with his band of ninety pikemen the day before yesterday on the Hill of Tara by the troops. Desperate villains! We are cutting them down now pretty fast."

It was in the season of the vernal springtime, when the ministers of evil and Atè, personated by Castlereagh, let slip their hordes of furies over a peaceful and smiling land. It is now advancing late in autumn; and where are the many rustic hamlets, and thatched cots, that had nestled once in sequestered bowers, and peeped out from gorge and glen on the mountain, or by the river side, clustered in humble group, upon the open sward, basking in tranquil repose, or lay scattered amid wild upland regions, the voice of whose many waters, dashing in cascades to the valley, or murmuring and purling through pebbly channels, the loud howling of the storm cannot drown? It is night, and where are the sheiling roofs, and the glimmer of the hearth-light through the pane that once, like an oasis in the desert, met the belated wanderer's eye? Hark! what cry of lamentation, what voice of wailing thrills upon the startled ear, and stirs the calm pulsation of nerve and vein to a deeper heart-throb? How awfully from the drear solitude ascends the choral dirge, ever wilder and

louder, ringing through the reverberating arch of the firmament, as though bursting heart-strings had given forth their last throes of anguish, with the passionate rush of a spirit just severed from their clasp! Hark! what phantom-like shapes glide by the half-shrouded moonbeams, along the highways, and by devious routes; while others yet hover and linger, unwilling to depart, round the dismantled wrecks, and upon the site of ruined homesteads. Alas! that lament of mourning is their farewell to the land they shall inhabit no more, and to the graves of their kindred with whose dust theirs shall not commingle.

Upon the deck of one of the many fine vessels that lined the Dublin quay is congregated a vast swarm of the children of the Western Isle, departing to seek in unknown and distant clime a home denied them on their own soil, and the bread which robbery and oppression should there not wrench from the hard hand of honest toil, to pamper idle iniquity. Foremost and conspicuous among the self-expatriated emigrant pioneers stand Miles O'Byrne, Maurice O'Driscoll, Don Antonio MacMahon, Euphemia, and Nelly; and amid the crowd that lined the shore stood Captain Courtney, Percy Esmond, and Florence, holding in her hand, pressed to her lip, the golden crucifix which enclosed a tress of raven hair, the last relic and memento of him who bore away with him her heart, and with whom she had, in that last wild, hurried adieu, parted for ever. No tear bedewed her eye, but her cheek wore that hue which tells of life unhinged from mould transmuted to marble, and done with mortal care; while he, steadfast, silent, with thoughts he dare not utter, pale with agony too bitter for tears, gazed mournfully upon the severed idol of his knightly devotion, with feelings that must expire unknown and be buried out of sight in his bosom. The red sunset glow is streaming upon the still, deep river, and em-purpling the shades of eve, as they fall upon the scene. Amid the songs of the mariners and the alternate hush and murmur of the surging multitude, the anchor is weighed; the vessel, with its heavy weight, sways from side to side; the sails swell to the light breeze; a deafening cheer, blended with wailing from the shore, is responded

to by a heartrending cry from the deck ; a cry of woe and farewell, from riven bosoms, for sundered ties of human affections, which nought can repress, swells and rings awfully and evermore solemnly on the ear. Morn, rising in the open sky, shines upon the blue expanse of the deep, and upon the emigrant ship steering gallantly on her way, far, far upon her course, every sail inflated with favouring winds, and the briny gales of the shoreless realm fanning cheeks yet humid with tears, and bosoms yet heaving with convulsive throes from that wrench of the heart and the hand from all that was dear to life. Maurice O'Driscoll, aching with the ghastly wound festering in his soul, brooding over the immeasurable ruin of all his hopes and fortunes, sat apart, gazing listless upon the foamy track cut by their progress through the billows ; while Miles O'Byrne, no less dejected by the stroke that had cast into eclipse all his future life, stood leaning against the mast with folded arms, hearing from O'Hart and Mooney the blacksmith—who had contrived to escape and smuggle themselves among the emigrants—accounts of various disasters befallen their friends ; but he was chiefly interested in learning the fate of Ned Burke, who, having been taken prisoner along with Johnny Doyle in Dublin, were condemned by Major Sirr to receive each a hundred lashes, and be sent on board two separate transport vessels which had sailed for America the week before with gangs of prisoners, to be pressed into the war England was then waging with America ; and of Kitty Burke, whom they had met making her way from Wicklow, where she had been confined for a time with a wound in her leg, received in the last action. Meanwhile, day after day, the emigrant ship held her steady course ; night set upon the waves ; sunrise illumined the Atlantic ; and then came a change over the horizon. Skies lowered above, and from black, incumbent clouds spouted drenching rain-floods, and swept the breath of the equinox, engulfing the vessel in the abyss of mountain billows, and shaking every timber of the fragile thing, as it quaked in the tornado's grasp of wrath. Nelly and Effie, terrified, kept near Don Antonio, whose own many troubles, bravely stemmed and crushed

down, had not hindered him from manifesting towards them a paternal interest, and even courting their confidence; while in many a social moment he listened attentively to their prattle, and learned from them, with profound sympathy and secret surmise, allied to pain, the history of the *banshee*, and all the troubles of which she had been the dread forerunner. Now close by his side they crouched, within sight of the land their destined goal, and beheld a fine frigate in the offing, struggling to make the port; when lo! the close-reefed topgallant mast gave way beneath a shock of the tempest; the vessel lurched, floundered, and a death-shriek rose from the black abyss of the raging deep, strewn with human forms, gasping and struggling for life. Oh, for an arm to aid! Swiftly the *Amphitrite's* boats are out and manned. Miles and Maurice strain every nerve; their comrades ply the oar with vigorous stroke; but long ere they reached the scene of disaster, buffeted by waves and winds, almost every soul had gone down. The foremost boat picked up two or three, one faintly struggling form floated towards theirs, then sunk. Miles leaped over, caught him by the hair, himself narrowly escaping being swept beyond reach of helping hands; and being aided back into the boat, he discovered in the inanimate form he had just rescued from a watery grave and the boiling surge the boy Ned Burke!

CHAPTER XLVII.

CASTLEREAGH ACHIEVES HIS END, AND ENDS HIS CAREER.

"Thus even-handed justice
Returns the ingredients of the poisoned chalice
To our own lips."

SHAKESPEARE.

"He in whose dread hand
The lightnings vibrate holds them back until
The trampler of this goodly earth hath reached
His pyramid height of power, that so his fall
May, with more fearful oracles, make pale
Man's crowned oppressors!"

HEMANS.

TRIUMPHANT over the herculean stand of Grattan, and the small cohort of magnanimous patriots who had fought by his side to oppose and resist the abolition of their country's independence, despite the rivers of blood shed by the gallant nation to preserve its freedom, coercion, bribery, corruption and falsehood—base tools of the minions of Castlereagh and the Government—carried the day. Ireland's liberty was violently wrested from her grasp; the royal charter of the Irish nation, guaranteed by the British Legislature shortly before and confirmed by the words, the signature, and the great seal of the monarch, was cancelled, and the constitution of the country was voted away by paid British nobles, Orange gentry, and clerks and hirelings employed and smuggled into Parliament for the occasion.

"Upon the evening of the last year of the Act which was to transfer an ancient and respectable nation, crowned with an aureole of more than four thousand years of traditionary

and historic fame and untarnished honour, to the condition of a tributary province, dependent upon the questionable honour of England for justice, the Houses of Parliament were closely invested by the military, no demonstration of popular feeling was permitted. A British regiment, near the entrance, patrolled through the Ionic colonnades. The galleries were crowded, but not by those who had been accustomed to witness the eloquence, and to animate the debates of the assembly. A monotonous and melancholy murmur ran through the benches. Scarcely a word was exchanged among the members. At length the expected moment arrived. The order for the third reading of the bill for the Legislative Union between Great Britain and Ireland was moved by Lord Castlereagh. 'Unvaried, tame, cold-blooded, the words seemed frozen as they issued from his lips;' and, as if a simple citizen of the world, he seemed to have no sensation on the subject, at that moment he had no country, no God but his ambition. He resumed his seat; confused murmurs ran through the house; it was visibly affected. Every character in a moment seemed involuntarily rushing to its index, some pale, some flushed, some agitated. Several members withdrew before the question could be repeated, and an awful momentary silence succeeded their departure. The Speaker rose slowly from his chair, held up the bill, looked steadily round him on the last agony of the expiring Parliament, and as the fatal sentence, 'The ayes have it,' was pronounced by him with subdued voice, for an instant he stood statue-like, then flung the bill upon the table, and sank into his chair, exhausted and indignant."*

The last meeting of the Parliament in College Green was held on Saturday, October 2nd, 1800; and in proportion as there was humiliation and mourning among the patriot few for their nation's downfall from glory's high pinnacle, and for its usurped right of self-legislation, so was their joy, and gratulation, and banqueting, in the high places of power, for victory achieved, what though the blood-stained laurel wreath had been dragged in

* Gilbert's Hist. of Dublin.

pollution, and honour and chivalry stood proudly aloof from the ignoble revels of degraded slaves? Chief of the pandemonium, he whose brow glistens beneath the glare of a coronet—yet why is his cheek pale? and his eye, why does it gleam with a charnel light, in whose phosphoric glitter there is neither soul nor mirth? Has the cup not been filled to the brim for which he stipulated? Has the guerdon of his labour, weighed in the scale of his ambition been found fraudulently short of measure. He has achieved his end and aims. At the altar of ambition two most ill-assorted hands have been joined in bands of unhallowed union; over hecatombs of mangled dead, and thousands of ravaged homes, and through floods of widows' and orphans' tears, he has stepped lightly, to make Erin and Albion one. Great Britain applauds his loyal zeal; minions, who themselves following his steps have risen from obscurity to notoriety and opulence on their country's wreck, extol his genius and render abject homage at his footstool. Why is his cheek pale, and his soul disturbed, and his heart oppressed with weight of secret care? Who can tell? Paroxysms, indeed, he has; and by fits and starts flashes of incoherent gaiety burst through the gloom like wildfires shooting and glimmering in desolate marshes, as though the spirit from time to time made spasmodic effort to hurl off a load that oppressed, or break from a chain that galled it. Yet, like the contortions of a galvanised body, these unspontaneous expressions, designed to cloak the perturbations of a mind ill at ease, deceived no one. The observer might construe as he pleased of the cause, but to all it was apparent that the Marquis of Londonderry—once Castlereagh—was an unhappy man, oppressed with care thought some, preyed upon by illness deemed others. And so time wore on, and brought no change, and the unsolved mystery ceased to surprise, people became accustomed to his altered mood, and other subjects of wonder and items of interest began to fill up the routine of daily business and afford theme for talk and comment.

First, the general topic was a disgraceful trial, in which the Rev. Nathaniel Lamb appeared as defendant, after

a long search, having been arrested abroad, in company with a lady, the wife of an officer, and mother of five children, with whom he had eloped on the very morning of the day appointed for his wedding with Miss Fanny Higgenboggan, while the wrinkled bride, in her white satin dress and orange blossoms, waited in vain at the altar for the bridegroom. Diamonds and bank-notes had vanished for ever, leaving her a beggared creature, to eke out the rest of her days, supported by alms, in a garret in Gregg's-lane.

Some time later and an event of more importance threw all Dublin into a panic—the failure of a bank, by which thousands of depositors were ruined, was announced in the *Morning Gazette*, and at the tidings Lady Alicia Luttrell, roused from the stupor of despair, into which she had been plunged when the rumour reached her that O'Driscoll had sailed in the emigrant ship *Amphitrite*, and that she would never behold him more. Livid with anxiety, she rung for the carriage she was to order for the last time, and drove in haste to the residence of the bankrupt firm, from whence she returned reckless and desperate, to drown present consciousness of her pauperised condition in deep draughts of intoxicating stimulants, and thenceforth to drag out a life of remorse and misery in the lowest haunts of vice, in degraded association with the vilest profligates of every class of the city.

On the evening of the day when this public disaster was made known an alarming fire was reported to have broken out in the residence of Miss Higgenboggan, in Dawson-street. It was with much difficulty extinguished after some hours, but not before Miss Higgenboggan had been so severely burned, in the efforts to extricate her from a top window, that she died two days after in the house of Mr. and Mrs. Pomfret, *alias* Caroline Damer, whose immense landed property, bequeathed by Mr. Damer to his *protegée*, presented sufficient inducement to Sardanapalus Pomfret to forego all thought of Miss Esmond, and to bestow himself upon the wealthy heiress, to the intense mortification of Guildford Colandisk, who, in a threadbare coat, broken shoes, and battered hat, attended among the spectators to

revile and rail at bride and bridegroom, and from which he only desisted and disappeared when a livery servant, commissioned by old Pomfret, the father-in-law of the bride elect, approached to whisper some words, among which the word "horsewhip" was heard distinctly uttered by some prying ear close by. Miss Higgenboggan being conveyed in a blanket, to Mr. and Mrs. Pomfret's house in gratitude for their kindness, left them before witnesses all her jewels, two thousand pounds in gold, which fortunately was not deposited in the derelict bank, was stowed away with jewels in a strong box, the key of which, night and day, rested on her bosom; and her forgiveness and one shilling to her foolish sister Fanny, for whose reduced state she was much grieved. But when search was made among the *debris* of the burned house no vestige of strong box, gold, or jewels was found; the servants could give no account of its mysterious disappearance, or how the fire originated. They even threw out hints that the old missus of late was apt to ramble in imagination, and to doze over the fire, and to fall asleep reading the paper in bed by a lighted candle, and that if there were any gold or jewels, which they didn't know of, "in coorse it wor all consumed in the fire." While, on the other hand, Miss Fanny, as yet unaware that she had no interest in the reversion, loudly asserted her opinion that the mansion was set on fire by the menials themselves, for the object of effecting a wholesale robbery without risk of detection; that she had often warned Sophy their lives were not safe in such hands; and that she was quite satisfied in her mind that the jewels, value some thousand pounds, and the gold abstracted in the confusion, were carried off by parties, aided and abetted by themselves, who had planned with them the whole business.

Holding in her hand the paper fraught with the exciting news, Lady Castlereagh entered the study where her husband was seated alone before a table strewn with books, and sought to interest him in the subject, and engage him in

* Read, in "Ireland before the Union," the history of Lady Elizabeth Luttrell, sister of Lord Carhampton, and also that of Kingsborough, Clonmel, Carhampton, and Beresford.

conversation. He listened gravely to the details, and with evident attention expressed his opinion that the fire was the work of incendiarism for the purpose of robbery, hoped that the guilty parties would be found, then suddenly stopped short, his jaw fell, and with eyeballs rigidly fixed, he looked as though he were scared at sight of some object of dread before him. "There it is again; again the naked child! Look, look!—whence comes it?" He paused aghast, then, squeezing the hand of the marchioness,* he said, with faint attempt at a smile, as he observed the astonishment expressed in her countenance:

"Do you see nothing?"

"I see nothing," responded her ladyship, still more amazed. "What ails you, my dear?—we are alone."

"Look there!" he whispered. "Is that nothing? Are your eyes not as clear as mine, or do you fondly strive to persuade me against my senses? See his shadow upon the wall. I'm not one subject to delusion."

"You are ill, dear; your brain is overtaxed, and you are feverish," she soothingly replied, determining to send for the physician.

"Do you really think so?" he exclaimed, eagerly catching at a suggestion that seemed to afford some relief. "There now, it is gone; I breathe more freely. I am sure you are right; but the agony is fearful; I don't feel myself when it comes on; a horror seizes my soul, a sense of something terrible hovering near oppresses me like a vapour, and then—and then—I think I'll change air; I'll go over to England for a while; this climate does not agree with me, and the things I have done, somehow they trouble me. I can't sleep; I have tortured dreams. Agar and the rest assured me I was right. I suppose they should know. Why is my conscience disturbed? Nero laughed, they tell us, over the ruins of Rome, over the flames kindled by him. I have done nothing so bad as that, have I? Are you going so soon? Just ring for my valet; I tremble to stir; I fear to be left alone;—what is over me?"

Her ladyship withdrew, convinced now that her hus-

* Of Londonderry.

band's malady was of a nervous character, which it only needed proper treatment and repose to cure, along with change of air and scene, to invigorate his mind.

The valet entered, and stood waiting commands. His lordship for some moments was silent, then starting, said with hurried voice, thick and tremulous, and anxious straining eyes, in which could be traced no vestige of their wonted cold, imperturbable serenity.

"Richard, put out that man."

"What man, my lord?" cried the valet, looking extremely puzzled. "Who does your lordship mean?"

"Oh, never mind; I forgot; you don't know who I mean; you don't see him," returned the marquis more calmly. "But I see him; 'tis to me he comes," he muttered, in lower tone. "Fitzpatrick, why do you persecute me? What is done is done, and cannot be recalled; but I had no hand in your death, I passed no sentence. Peace—peace—oh, let me rest!" He laid his hand upon his brow and covered his eyes a moment, then looking up with distorted visage, addressed the astounded valet:

"Whence comes the naked child? Why do they let it in? Let someone see to it! Gold, gold, give gold, anything to rid me of him.—Come hither, Richard, you are a faithful and trusty servant, you would not, I know, deceive or betray me, betray the confidence I repose in you?"

"Surely I would not, my lord," returned the man, whose steady eye and frank and sympathising countenance, seemed a guarantee for his master's trust.

"Then tell me, Richard," said his lordship, solemnly. "Do you think, do others think, I am mad?"

"Heavens! no, my lord!" cried the valet, in consternation. "No one could think it that knows your lordship."

"But, Richard, do not people remark a change in me; do I not at times appear strange, and say strange things?"

"So do we all, my lord, when we have anything on our mind that worries we must give it out."

"There it is; you have just said it; but you have nothing on your mind goading you to an end that will be madness or despair; I have."

"Lord! my master, no; don't say it. Cheer up, sir; it is your brain that is but fevered for want of rest."

"Ay, for want of rest," reiterated his lordship, musing. "I cannot rest, my dreams are terrible. I dream betimes I am a headsman, and my arm is weary beheading multitudes, whose blood spouts up in my face, whose shrieks ring in my ear. I awake shaking like one with the palsy, and then that spectre! I strove long against conviction to believe it was nothing more, but in vain; it is he—I know it is he. Do you believe in ghostly visitations, Richard? If not what is the naked child, and why comes he too? Do you believe in spirits coming back from the dead?"

"Not I, my lord!"

"Well, I do. Listen!—breathe it not to other ear, I charge thee on thy faith, lest friends fall away, and enemies, of whom I have many, raise the cry: 'Mad dog!—stone him!—chain him!' Richard, I am haunted."

"Haunted, my lord!"

"Yes; these seven days and seven nights he too has come."

"Who, my lord?"

"Fitzpatrick."

"What, my lord, the priest? You fancy it, surely. Out of the kindness of your heart, you suffered the well-merited death of the Popish rebel, who was once a college friend, to make too great an impression upon you; it has preyed upon you till your mind has conjured up a phantom to plague you. Dismiss him and it, my lord, from your thought and you will be yourself again." His lordship gave a ghastly smile that expressed more of pain than relief.

"Fancy!—no. I may close the curtains and fancy it is night, but I cannot fancy myself out of my reason in the radiance of its noon. Listen, Richard. This day week I was in my dressing-room adjusting my hair before the mirror, preparing to dine at the Castle. I assert that farther than the North Pole is from the South, was my thought of that man till standing before me in the mirror, there I saw him as in life, pale, placid, yet austere, and his eyes, fixed awfully upon mine, seemed to probe the

very depths of my soul. With a cold spasm of the heart I recoiled, and when again I ventured to look he was gone. You came soon in, and you may remember I called for brandy and water to revive my fainting spirit."

"I remember it, my lord," said the valet, somewhat posed. "But you said it came again."

"I returned in good spirits from the Castle, forgetting the cause of my alarm, or if I remembered, only to chide my own folly, and laugh at my own imagination. The next day, in my study, in this chair was I seated. Beresford and Norbury had just left me. I was thinking of them, and the business on which they had come, quite irrelevant to any other, when lo! raising my eyes, without firelight or sunlight to cause the reflection, I beheld a human shadow, the shadow of a man beckoning, as if with warning finger, upon the wall. Hastily I turned to see what intruder had entered, and, behold, there he stood, stern-browed, with rebuking eye and menacing finger uplifted against me. I should, I believe, have dropped in a swoon, but that, almost soon as beheld, he vanished: but not so the weight upon my mind, for now I knew it was no delusion had befooled me."

"Well, my lord, what next?"

"I fell into a train of musing, for I had no power to move; my hands were cold and clammy, and a cold clammy dew stiffened the hair upon my head; thoughts and memories of things forgotten, or lightly glanced over, deeds I would not that the eyes of the world should scan, and other deeds for which I sought the world's applause, came crowding in black and hideous deformity, like shapeless fiends, full of life and venom, gnawing heart and brain, until beneath the burden I actually felt as if myself were transformed into a monster of iniquity, an abomination to myself and the eye of heaven; and there I sat and mused, and felt as though I would wish to escape from myself; and I felt a yearning come over me for the solace of some sympathising bosom of which I could take council, of some trustful ear into which I could pour my trouble, and disburden my soul of its load of pollution.

What do you think I felt tempted—tempted, ay, to the very verge of action—to do in that hour?”

“I don’t know, my lord. No hurt to yourself, I hope?”

“Pooh, no. To brave the unknown future is, I promise you, the last of my thoughts. I was tempted to see a priest—a Catholic priest—and go to confession. What do you say to that? Ay, to pour out my soul in tears at his feet, and die.”

“Don’t say it anywhere else, my lord, lest people talk.”

“Fear me not. Well I fought against the impulse, against myself, my alarmed conscience. I made a desperate rally to shake off the hand that had grasped me.—There’s the naked child again looking at me from the fireplace!—I went to luncheon, and then to ride, to dine, and amid jovial friends and amusements I succeeded at length in banishing every unpleasant thought, as I hoped, for ever—alas!”

“Go on, my lord, please.”

“The next day—you see I keep good count—I was in the office with the secretary. Foster, Lifford, Beresford, and many others had come in, and were about me; among them there he stood. On me—on me alone—his gaze fixed with unutterable sorrow—with a look that thrilled my soul. I uttered an involuntary exclamation. Then, ashamed at the wondering glances around, and conscious that none would believe but that I raved, did I say what I looked upon, I held my peace, and pleaded a cramp had twitched me. Then maddened, I snapped my fingers with defiance at my tormentor.” His lordship suddenly paused, raised his hands, looked at them, and said: “How is this? I am all over blood—my hands, my clothes. How did I get it?”

“Oh, my lord, you are talking nonsense,” cried the valet. “If you speak this way people will say you are mad, indeed.”

“I won’t, Richard; that would be bad for you, for I have promised to leave you something comfortable at my death; and if it were said I was insane you would lose it.

But nevertheless, I cannot help the evidence of my own senses. There, fetch me water, I must wash. Go; some visitor is coming, and mind you are sworn in confidence not to reveal to mortal what I have disclosed to you alone."

The valet, promising silence, withdrew. The day drew peacefully to the close. Lord Londonderry appeared much as usual in health and demeanour; retired as usual to rest, rose the following morning, and an hour later the metropolis was electrified by the report that his lordship was dead—had died by his own hand, in his princely mansion in the country on the day preceding!

CHAPTER LXVIII.

CONCLUSION.—THE EXILES OF ERIN.

"Swells there no requiem o'er thy early bed?
Wave there no knightly standard o'er thy head
As for thy chieftain sires? Far in the gloom
Of the primeval forests dost thou sleep!
Thy dirge, the winds thro' western woods that sweep
Across the broad savannahs, and strange flowers
Drop o'er thy rest, brightening the cedar bowers."

K. S.

NED BURKE, snatched scarcely alive from a watery grave, again respired the breath of vital air, but brain fever supervening upon all the suffering, mental and bodily, which he had gone through, he lay for several weeks battling with death, and all unconscious of the hand that had rescued him from the briny surge. When at last the King of Terrors relaxed, and reason's light began to glimmer weakly through the misty vapours that had temporarily obscured the bright, clear intellect, the boy found

himself awakened, as it were, from a trance, lying upon a couch draped in white and blue, in a chamber spacious and decorated in a style altogether new to his eyes, combining elegance of taste with costly luxuriance suggestive of unstinted wealth. It was on the ground floor; and looking through the open windows shaded with gossamer drapery, through which a soft zephyr wafted fragrant odours unknown before to his sense, he perceived running all around the dwelling a light verandah twined with vines heavy with grapes in clustering bunches, purple and amber, shining through festoons of wreathing jasmine and roses, green velvet lawns sloping softly to the margin of a majestic river sweeping along in golden ripples of light, its banks fringed with snow-white lilies, magnolia, blossoms in wild profusion scenting the air with their perfumed incense; the golden lotus, myrtles, and willows; cypress-trees and oaks of primeval date, garlanded with moss and mistletoe, and cedars of ancient growth, dotted the undulating sward, interspersed with arbours and groves of orange-trees; the shadowy crested cotton and china-trees lifting their heads through meadows of flowery shrubs, and gardens of a thousand floral hues; pelicans shining in snowy plumage waded along by the banks of the rippling water; birds of wonderful form and colour, humming-birds and mocking-birds, flitted from tree to tree, making the woods and the air resound with strange music. Above all, the great sun was slowly descending from the blue warm sky, bannered like a glorious pavilion with streamers of crimson and purple, along the royal march of the god of day. In speechless wonder the invalid gazed awestruck upon the scene; the prairie all on fire with the golden glow; and, save for the hum of the bee and myriad insects, and the song of birds, basking in the solemn hush of dream-like repose, then thrilled with mysterious emotion, and recalling bitter memories of the olden time, his eyes filled with tears; but ere the rising sob had parted from his quivering lip, a joyous laugh breaking upon his ear from without, and the sound of many voices tuned by gladness approaching, caused him to check the falling tear and rise upon his elbow to look out; with a tumultuous

rush of the blood to his head, he beheld Euphemia O'Byrne with Nelly Doyle, accompanied by Miles and Don Antonio, coming towards the verandah. Miles looked in at the window and Ned, making a sign to him, he said :

"Excuse me just one moment ; I want to see what this poor boy wants."

Don Antonio, looking undoubtedly happy, thrust a letter into his bosom and sat down in the porch, smiling on the little girls who with eager faces stood close beside him. Miles went over to the bedside of the patient, saying, to himself: "My poor fellow, you won't need any help I can give much longer ; he is sinking fast." He filled out a draught from a vial into a glass, and put it to the lips of the boy, who drank it, and said, quite collectedly :

"Thank ye, Mr. Miles ; thank ye, sir."

Miles stared ; for three weeks the boy had not recognised him till now. He took his hand, felt the pulse, and said, softly :

"Are you better, my boy ?" The response for a moment silenced him.

"Yes sir ; thank ye kindly. Whisper, Mr. Miles. This is a grand place we're in ; an' when we get used to it we'll be as happy as—as the blessed angels. I haven't seen any of them yet, sir. Nor herself—ye know who I mean ?—the Blessed Mother, sir, and her Divine Son—when will we see them, and——When did you an' Miss Effie come, sir ?"

"Hush, hush ! you musn't speak now," said Miles, gently. "There, lie down. What would you like ?" Ned looked perplexed.

"Musha, sir, I thought we might do what we liked here, an' be quite fresh and nimble to move about ; aren't we in heaven, sir ? I know to a certainty I was drowned in the shipwreck ; no one could escape in such a sea and such a storm."

"Well, Ned, you did," returned Miles, who now understood the boy was no longer raving. "You were picked up in time to keep you a while longer out of heaven. There, you needn't be feeling your hands and arms ; I am telling you the truth. Hands from our ship picked you up at sea, and here we are all met safe, as I hope we shall hereafter,

in St. Louis, on the banks of the Mississippi, where it meets the Zèche flowing through the Opelousas. Lie down, dear boy, and keep quiet till the doctor shall have seen you again, and dream of pleasant days before you. I'll be back presently." Miles, having settled the pillow, and seen the boy compose himself to tranquillity, returned to Don Antonio, whom he accosted, saying :

"Now, friend, tell me your good news. You are expecting, in a day or two, a visit from your son-in-law and grandchild, you have said. I congratulate you with all my heart ; but tell me this, I had been under the impression you had but the one, and that she was lost in the wreck of your vessel on the Irish coast?"

"Saved ! My darling child was saved by a miracle," cried Don Antonio, excitedly. "She was thrown into some creek by the violence of the waves, and lay stunned for some hours, far away from notice or help. For three or four days she wandered about, and was finally met by a priest, who, hearing her story, contrived to send her back to her friends in charge of some clergymen going out to Montreal and the district of Ontario, where her father now resides. See there, this letter tells all we can know at present. How's the boy?"

"The fever seems abated ; he speaks rationally," said Miles. "But for fear of causing any shock or relapse he must be kept quiet till the doctor sees him, and Uncle Sambo, and cousin Scipio, and Aunt Dinah, and the whole sable family had better keep out of sight, lest the simple fellow deem he has fallen into bad company. A while ago he was indulging the agreeable notion that he had taken a short cut to heaven."

Effie gave a merry laugh : "Come, Nelly, let's go and see him again. Sure enough, it is like paradise this place ; and, if Ned gets well, and if Maurice and Miles would only brighten up we'd be as happy as the day's long. Wouldn't we, Nellie?"

"And when you've got another playfellow to romp with, and I can tell you, if she be not sadly altered, my little Alphonse is a tomboy," said Don Antonio, smiling benignantly.

"I wish we could jump into the middle of next week, and have her at once," said Effie. But Nelly was silent, and Effie, construing the meaning of it, said gaily, in a whisper, as they went towards the sick-room: "You needn't be afraid she'll put your nose out of joint, Nelly, we are too old friends for that; besides, I'll hate her if she's prettier than you and I. Ah! there's Ned peeping at us;—come over and let us talk to him."

In a few days Ned Burke was so far convalescent that he was able to leave his bed and be carried out by O'Driscoll to bask in the sun upon a bank of flowers, and be introduced to a colony of black aunts, uncles and cousins, Don Antonio's slaves; while the Don himself, with Miles, and Effie, and Nelly, in gala costume and high excitement, waited impatiently for the arrival of the expected visitors. Nor had they much longer to wait in suspense.

"Here dey cum, massa!" shrieked a black urchin from the bough of a peach tree. "Ole Joe, him make sign wid whip along de abenuw."

"Let us go on and meet the carriage; I see the mules turning the corner," said Don Antonio, stepping out at a brisk rate. They met just as the equipage rumbled into the demesne; it drew up, a gentleman, whose hair was shot with threads of silver, alighted, and was clasped in the arms of Don Antonio; a richly dressed child sprung out, and was locked in his embrace. He turned to introduce them to his friends, and his astonishment at seeing Miles and his son-in-law suddenly rush into each other's arms, with the exclamation: "Good heavens! my brother!" was only at its culmination when, after a breathless stare among the three juveniles, he beheld a smile of recognition in each eye, and heard Effie say, quite simply: "Why, I know you very well; wern't you the banshee that came to us over in Ireland before all the trouble broke out?"

The stranger listened, but uttered no word.

"Banshee or no, she's your relative and mine," said Miles, embracing her, while Don Antonio, in Spanish, asked her some question, to which she replied readily in the same language.

"It was Father John Murphy, she says who found her straying and sent her here," said Don Antonio; "but what do you know about her, Effie?"

"Everyone was afraid of her," stammered Effie, blushing, "but she fastened on me, and would come home to Nelly's people, where we might all have been to-day only for the troubles, and then we scattered, and lost her."

"And then you came after the banshee, to make acquaintance with your uncle Phelim," smiled the little one's father, embracing her.

"Come on home," cried Don Antonio, and let us feast and make merry over our adventures; they eclipse those of Telemachus, and throw Don Quixote into the shade."

* * * * *

Little more remains to be told of our tale. Amid the splendours of their Transatlantic home, the young, with buoyant spirits, soon reconciled themselves, and became acclimatised to their new sphere. Not so the elder ones, whose hearts, knitted to the land of their fathers' graves, like plants unseasonably transplanted to other clime, drooped and withered. For them there was no elixir in the vivifying sunbeams that warmed all nature into a tropical fecundity of spontaneous life and growth, and a very riot of revelry. For them the balmy dew shed no drop into the cup of exile to medicate its bitterness. O'Driscoll, pining beneath the dark shadow of an omnipresent sorrow corroding his heart, with bitter memories of what might have been, and would be no more, withered into premature age, and showed in the noontide of his years the semblance of a dismantled wreck, a tree that had been struck by lightning and blighted in its bloom. And Miles O'Byrne! Oh! mistake not the bright red flush upon his swarthy cheek, nor the ardent fire in his burning eye for the fresh glow and radiant beam of health! No, say rather it is life's expiring embers giving forth their latest power in the fierce blaze that consumes them to ashes. He, too, restless with the ever-present pain of miserable retrospection, vanished dreams of hopes once high and happiness unrealised, wandered and faded amid the Western bowers. In company with his brother,

O'Driscoll, and Ned Burke, he had to satisfy a craving for change of scene and action, in which alone he found peace and refuge from thought, and set out to visit the shores of Ontario and sojourn a brief space with his long-lost, late-found relative. In vain!—the burning memories of the quenched hearth-fires of his own ruined land, and the awful tragedies in which he had part, with vulture-beak yet preyed upon his heart, and wherever he went he carried with him the reminiscence of that dread interview with the ghostly tenant of the ruined Castle of Robog. Beside the crystal floods where maple-trees waved their pallid foliage to the moaning gusts, and the swift arrow of the Huron had once smote the antlered deer, and pursued the falcon and the eagle in their heavenward flight, day by day his weary, melancholy brow drooped, and ere returning autumn's breath had blown upon the woods, and painted the forests with many-coloured dyes, Miles O'Byrne, surrounded by his faithful friends, and shrived by a priest of his own isle, who had grown hoary among his Indian flock, passed gently to eternal rest, in the purple haze of twilight hour; the mysterious whispers of the forest, and the voice of many waters mingling with the solemn *requiem* dirge, and the mournful lament of the few that loved him well, above the grave strewn with flowers in the quiet cemetery where they laid him, with his face to the west and the sun streaming down through the pendulous arches of the leafy colonnades of cedar and cypress bending above

Florence Esmond did not many weeks survive the wreck of all her bright visions. She, too, struck by the same bolt that had shattered so many hearts, languished in cold, proud silence, turning deaf ear away from the impassioned pleading of many a noble suitor, and, with a repining spirit that would not be comforted. Resisting all the solace of sympathy, and living apart with her own desolation, she declined each hour, attended in her last by Kitty Burke, whom she had accidentally met a few days after the departure of Miles, and engaged in her service.

"Bring me a priest," was the last command she issued to her faithful attendant. "Separated in this life, let us be

reunited in the next, where none can divide us: his faith has long been mine, and my hope is the same with his."

She died united to the fold of the One Shepherd, and rests beneath escutcheoned walls, where chevron and bend, and proud armorial bearings, designate baronial tombs, sepulchred in haughty state beneath the solemn aisle consecrated to the ashes of mortality.

Fifteen years have passed away; many changes and events have befallen the land, and many vicissitudes altered the position of individuals. The lowly have been, many a one, exalted and the haughty have been humbled; many an oppressor of the poor and the helpless called away to his account, and his race become extinct, their wealth cankered, and their ill-gotten heritage passed away into other hands; while their names, classed in the annals with those of Nero, Herod, Caligula, and the monsters and traitors of every clime and age, stand as hideous frontispieces in the book of chronology, a warning and a scorn to all future ages.* Claudius Beresford had become a bankrupt, and Horish the sweep, through whose means he lost the election of the county for which he stood, having purchased the great man's chariot, emblazoned with his coat-of-arms, paraded Dublin in state, in company with chosen friends of the sooty fraternity, smoking pipes, and descanting freely upon the altered times and the downfall of the great; and in every street bills on aristocratic houses proclaim a worthless aristocracy, parasites and aliens grafted upon a plundered land, departed from the scene of their iniquity. Unfortunately, too, emigration keeps draining away the country's life-blood; for, torn up, as it were, from the root by the spoliator's savage hand, the olden population is drifting away and flying fast to that distant shore from whence beckoning hands of the pioneers that have gone before them, and winged messages flitting across the ocean, summon them to new homes in a glorious free land, which they shall bequeath to their children—inheritors of glory such as the Cæsars never knew. Among the ships, there is one upon the point of sailing, and among the crowd two women are taking leave, with

* Read "Ireland before the Union."

tearful eyes: one is speaking, and in the sound of her voice, as she plaintively says: "Glad I'd be to be going with you, Kitty, and sure nothing keeps me, after your kind offer to pay my passage, out of the money Miss Esmond left ye, but the grave of my child," we recognise Meelan Conroy, so pale and worn to a skeleton that short, indeed, shall be the span that will separate her from sharing that narrow bed over which she stays to keep her loving vigils.

"Well, *avourneen machree*," returns, in firmer tone, the voice of our old friend Kitty Burke, "I don't gainsay but yer right, an' keep the goold all the same. Throth, I wouldn't care to go myself, only for Father Laurence bein' sint by the bishop to take charge o' the emigrants, an' to stay in forrin parts wid 'em; an' sure good right I have, for wasn't Moll Doyle's son as good as my own in some ways to me, from the time I happened on him, all as one as dead o' hardship an' sickness, in the fever at Dunleary, an' took him home to nurse?—an' hard set I was to earn what kep a shed over us at Ringsend, an' the life in our souls, till I met Miss Esmond that Sunday coomin' out o' the chapel, an' she stopped me an' gev me half-a-crown, an' engaged me to go to her, an' came to see the boy, an' helped me to give him schoolin' whin he got well, an' left me money enough to get him to the priesthood, since his heart was set on it—the heavens be her bed!—an' who knows but I might come across my own poor Ned, though it'll break my heart to see him workin' in convict clothes, maybe, or vagabonding about like a soldier?"

"Kitty, come on, they are weighing anchor, and the captain has, I am told, come on board," said a priest, leaning over the bulwarks. "Good-bye, Meelan; may God bless you, and pray for us."

"Och, *musha! musha! ferriergare!*" cried Kitty, snatching up a bundle and bustling on deck. With her head still turned towards her friend, she floundered against the captain, who had just come up with the mate, a stout, handsome, good-humoured-looking man, whose accent and bearing showed that he had spent some years under the Stars and Stripes.

"Port your helm, and look ahead, good dame!" he shouted, as, nearly capsized by Kitty's weight, he caught at a rope to steady his footing.

Kitty turned to apologise, but instead of doing so she gave a wild yell. "Queen o' Glory! it's Johnny Doyle, come back to take us all out to Ameriky! Larry! Larry! come here! Where's the priest? Here's his brother Johnny, that was thransported fifteen years ago."

"Let go the topforesail and ease off the main cable," shouted the captain, wringing Kitty's hand, grasping his brother's, and making a sign to them to follow him down to the cabin, while the vessel floated from her moorings, and the crowds on deck, too absorbed in final adieus to their own friends on shore, scarcely noticed the meeting and recognition of the long-parted friends.

After a favourable voyage they landed at Montreal. Thence the emigrants scattered, each taking various routes, some westward by the Oregon, towards the beautiful prairies clothed with verdure, lying in shadow and sunshine beyond the limits of the horizon, luxuriant with amorphas and roses, the compass-flower, and a thousand blossoms waving in the sweeping wind, and traversed by the bear, the elk, and herds of wild horses and buffaloes wandering at large over the war trails of the Indian; while others, the majority of whom were Father Laurence Doyle and Kitty Burke, set off towards the groves of orange and citron, the bayous, lagoons, and forests, and savannahs, where the great Mississippi flowed to the eastward. Within view of a stately city they halted upon the ninth day of their journey, and near a spacious and picturesque dwelling, smiling amid Arcadian scenery, and made cheerful by the voices of children at play among the gardens and the teeming fruit-trees. Here the tired travellers pitched their tent and lighted their fire to cook their evening meal and rest, while the priest said he would go over to the neighbouring mansion to make inquiries concerning their route. He was some time gone, and his friends, becoming uneasy, were beginning to speculate upon the cause of his delay, when one of the party announced his approach with a lady, a gentleman, and several children.

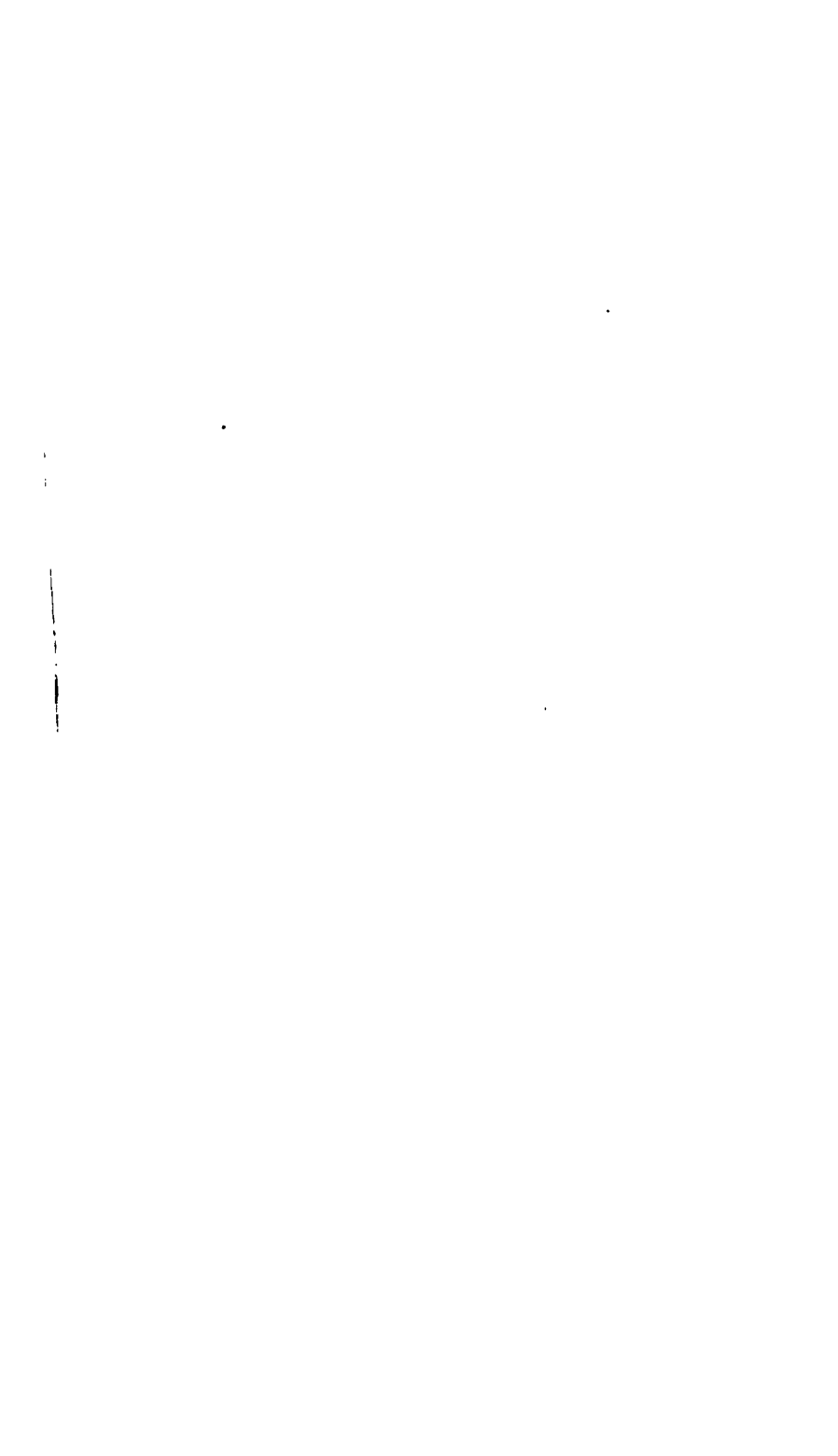
"Musha, never welcome them! what brings the quality?" cried Kitty, looking out dissatisfied; "they must have a power o' money! Look at the style of 'em, and the beauty o' the childhre, an' their dhress!"

The strangers came up. Kitty courtesied to the lady and gentleman.

"Mother, don't you know me?" cried Ned Burke, clasping her in his arms. "Mother, I didn't think you'd forget us," cried Nelly, pressing her to her bosom; "and here's your grandchildren come to welcome you."

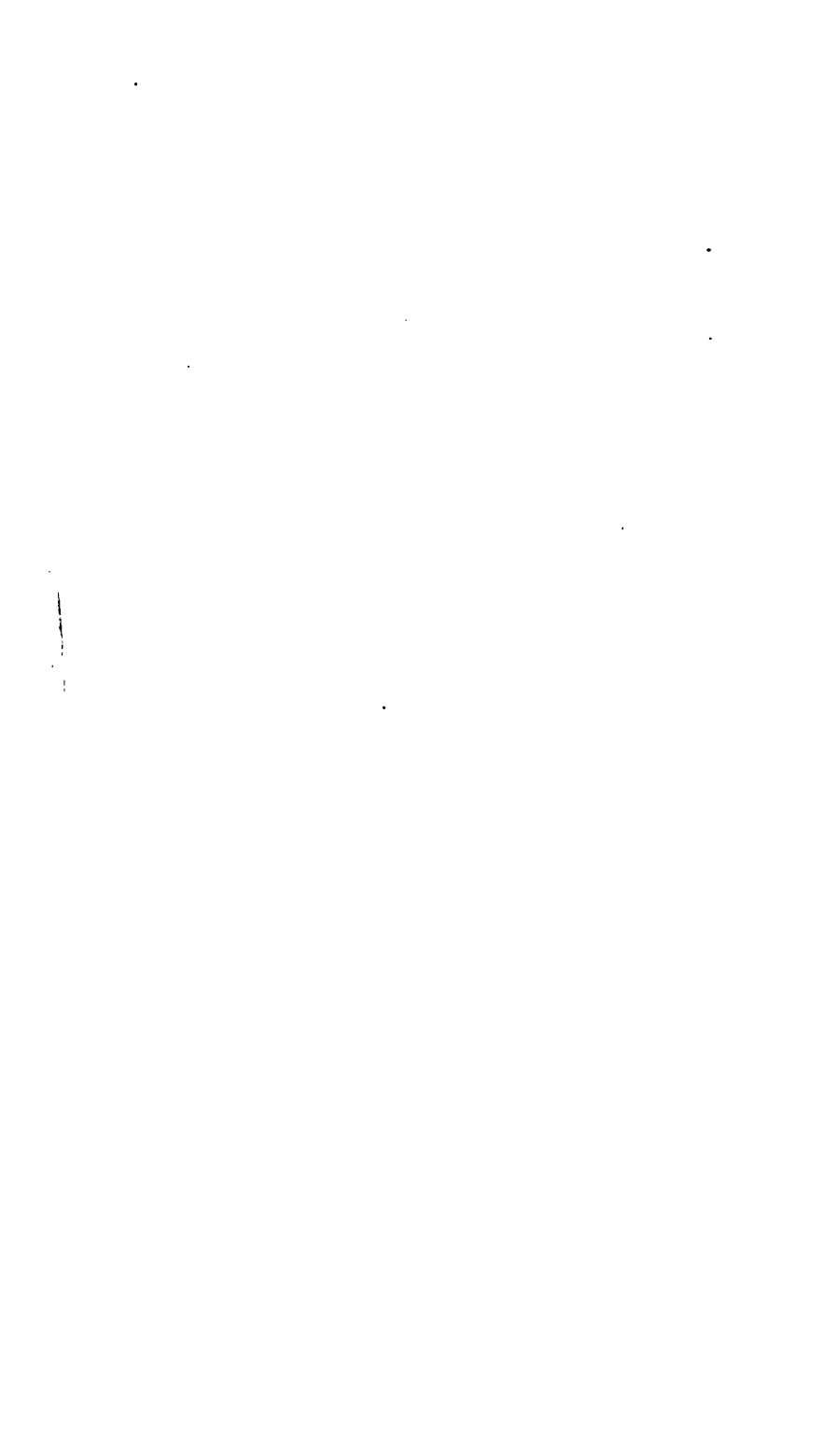
Kitty was not used to vent herself much in a sensational fashion, but emotion now overpowered her, and she fainted.

The emigrants proceeded no farther on their journey; they settled down to lay the foundation of a new city where they had encamped. Kitty henceforth divided her time between caring her grandchildren, superintending her son's establishment, helping her daughter Nelly to entertain her friends, and visiting at the Franciscan Convent, where Effie O'Byrne and Alphonsa had taken the veil, and instructed in the school the children of the emigrants, with whom they were wont betimes to speak of the dear old land, and keep alive the mournful traditions of the past in their faithful bosoms. Don Antonio M'Mahon resides with his son-in-law Phelim O'Byrne and his second wife, a descendant of the O'Harts, princes of Tara in the days of her regal splendour, and which heirloom of memory they carefully transmit to their children.



NOTE.

There s a beautiful poem by "K. S." upon " Miles O'Byrne, the Outlaw of '98," which we take leave to copy from the *Lamp*, of January, 1867.



APPENDIX.

MILES O'BYRNE, THE OUTLAW.

A TALE OF '98.

BRIGHT, thro' dim arches of the western woods,
Streamed the red glow of sunset, gilding o'er
The waveless lake that stretched its crystal floods
'Mid the green bosom of the forest shore,
Crown'd by tall pines, whose pendant branches swept
The deep still water, casting purple shade
O'er cliff and islet. Moor and woodland slept
In lonely beauty : fern-clad dell and glade
Seemed hushed to ev'n their primitive repose
In that still sunset hour : the antler'd deer
From his deep lair in tangled thicket rose,
And trod the woodland pathway void of fear
Of the swift Huron arrow. High o'erhead
In the blue light of heaven the eagle wheeled
In upward circles, and the falcon led
Her fierce-eyed nestlings forth ; and distant pealed
The silver cadence of a far cascade,
Plashing adown the rocks. No step of man,
Or sound of human presence, might invade
The stillness of the woods ! Since time began,
Scarcely more silent smiled the opal heaven,
Or closed more sweet the first deep calm of even.

Yet hark ! there breaks a far-off melody
On the hush'd air ; is it the dreamy breeze
Moaning in broken gusts, sad, fitfully
Athwart the boughs of pallid maple-trees,
That shade yon emerald knoll ? Whence that low tone—
So wild, so passionate, so strangely fraught
With burning memories of years bygone,
Pouring its waters of long-prison'd thought
In olden song and verse ? That strain could flow
But from an Irish heart, an Irish hand—
That mournful cadence raised so long ago
Round the quenched hearth-fires of their own lost land,
Whose dim gray headlands they must see no more—
Those outlawed dwellers by Ontario's shores.

Gather'd beneath the waving forest boughs
 The exiles rest, their daily hunting done,
 And o'er their weary, melancholy brows
 Pours the soft glory of the parting sun.
 It was the hour of Complin—and once more
 In thought their own dark western glens they trod,
 Sought, as of old, the mountain chapel's door,
 And prayed, where knelt their fathers, unto God,
 They had been brothers in their last wild feud
 Of wakened Erin, and together still
 They sought the free and leafy solitude
 True to that kindred bond, thro' good and ill.
 And of their band, one young and fiery heart,
 O'er whom scarce manhood's earliest tide had passed,
 Struggled in weariness and grief to part,
 And the red sunset faded scarce more fast
 Than he! In sorrow bent those stern sad men
 Around their dying leader, for they knew
 Long would it be ere they should see again
 One such as he, thro' joy or sorrow true
 To every noblest impulse; whose proud bearing
 Became the haughty sense of ancient line,
 The reckless buoyancy of Irish daring,
 And steadfast bravery that would hope resign
 With life alone! And yet of late a change
 Crept o'er his life, and forth to dream alone
 He took his daily path, in thought to range
 Where rose the eagle fastness once his own;
 And the dim faces of his early years
 For them he pined with silent, deathless love,
 With grief too bitter and too deep for tears!
 Aye! in some natures there are threads enwove
 With life's own current, with the inmost stream
 And fount of being, and, their presence fled,
 They track the walking vision, haunt each dream,
 And win the spirit to its lost and dead!

And this the voice that called thee, Miles O'Byrne,
 For thou wert reared, son of a chieftain race,
 'Mid the wild glens of Leinster, and didst learn
 In minstrel lore and legendary trace
 Of ancient feud that gathered round thy home—
 Hate of the Alien! and in each proud story
 High hopes of freedom, lofty dreams would come
 Of green Ierne's days of vanished glory!
 When the bright Sunburst of her native lords
 Waved all unconquered over rock and sea,
 And 'gainst the invading Norman flashed the swords
 Of an unbroken Irish chivalry!

This was thy dream, high heart! and could thy hand
 Have well fulfilled its bidding, there were now
 No foreign footprint on thy fatherland
 No cloud of slavery on an Irish brow!
 But all were not as thou and thine, or recked
 Of Erin's bygone glories, so they dwelt
 In coward safety. Thus the hope was wrecked
 Of Ireland's best, and the last death blow dealt
 To faith and freedom's cause; well might'st thou turn
 In scorn from earth to heaven, Miles O'Byrne!

There came a flush upon his fading cheek
 Feverish and brightly red its hectic glow,
 And his eye's fiery eloquence tho' weak,
 To tell the burning thoughts that surge below,
 Shone forth with dying lustre. He had risen
 Half from his moss-strewn couch, and shaking back
 The clustered silken waves of raven black
 From wasted cheek and forehead, bent to listen
 As to some air-born note.

"Ay! once, once more
 Raise the heart-stirring song—when last I heard
 Its burden, Maurice, dawn was glimmering o'er
 The hills of Wexford, and the west wind stirred
 The emerald banner of our risen land,
 And proudly beat each patriot heart to hear
 Its wakening music, and each stainless brand
 Flashed from its sheath at that stern battle-cheer
 That day is but a dream! yet, ere I die,
 Lay on my heart once more the gallant Green,
 That then waved o'er me, while the melody
 Of our lost cause recalls each stirring scene
 Of my wild stormy boyhood. Once again
 Let me live o'er the past, and be as I was then!"
 They raised the strain—a bygone rallying song—
 Of 'Ninety-Eight—fiery and rude the words!
 Yet as the night-wind bore the sound along,
 His ebbing life seemed trembling on the chords,
 So long and sadly stilled! His pale cheek fired
 At its fierce music, and his dark eye shone
 Joyously even in death, as one inspired
 By lofty thoughts that claim their source alone
 In faith and patriot love, thro' weal and woe
 The pilot stars of his dark course below!

* * * * *

And now the last and holiest rites are o'er
 An aged priest to friendly Indians known
 Has bid the pardoned spirit trusting soar
 Where mercy hovers o'er the judgment throne:

"Met by the glorious army of the just,
 Go forth," he cries, "while joyful angels bend
 Over their brother, ransomed from the dust,
 The faithful soldier constant to the end :
 Go! in His name, whose words the heavens control!
 Go! I command thee, forth! O Christian soul!"

Sank the low murmur of the forest aisle
 To holy silence, and the last farewell
 The fond heart breathed to distant Inisfail,
 And one yet dearer! Then the aclemn swell
 Of manly voices pouring forth the hymn
 For the departed spirit, slowly crept
 Through the o'er-arching woods, whose alleys dim
 Now in the purple haze of twilight slept;
 For all was o'er! Amid the noble dead
 That gallant heart lay peacefully at rest
 It's martyr-combat won. Bravest and best
 Of Erin's exiled champions, o'er thy bed
 Shall tears of burning grief be freely poured
 From manhood's stern proud eye, and long for thee
 Shall mourn one faithful breast whose every chord
 Beat at thy hero name! Far o'er the sea
 Where tower dark headlands o'er the ocean's flow
 And white-winged seamews skim the surge below,
 Thy Florence weeps thee! Thro' the weary day
 Till light is dying from the west away
 She wanders 'mid the scenes of love that shone
 O'er her young life, only to leave it lone.
 And desert! What to her was lineage fair
 And a broad heritage? She might not share
 Thy fallen fortunes o'er the deep, or be
 Thy wife, thy comforter, thine all!—Not even
 The lone support of hopeless agony,
 Kindness of pitying hearts, to her was given;
 Her haughty kindred battled for the cause
 Of alien tyranny and alien laws;
 And rather had they seen their sister laid
 Before their feet, as a dead lily broken
 By the rude gales of autumn than 'twere said
 That Florence Esmond gave or troth or token
 To outlawed rebel! Solitary now
 Her daily paths to yon dark shelved ravine
 Of Bantry's shore. Loose from her marble brow,
 Whose paleness tells of grief that late has been,
 Fall the rich locks, in many a long damp cluster
 Of shadowy gold in careless beauty streaming
 O'er the deep azure eyes whose tearful lustre
 Thro' the low veil of darkest lashes gleaming,

Strains o'er the waste Atlantic. One slight hand
 Clasps a bright cross of chaste and antique gold,
 Its legend, wrought beneath a sheathless brand,
 "For God and Ireland" and within it rolled
 A tress of raven hair!—the gift he gave
 When here they held in the grey wintry dawning
 Their last wild hurried parting! The broad wave
 Bore his white sails athwart the beams of morning
 And Florence was left desolate!

She bore
 Her lot undauntedly; none guessed the tale
 Of her ill-fated passion: as before
 Stately and cold her bearing, but more pale
 Grew the patrician features, and she dwelt
 Yet more apart, and when gay suitors knelt
 With vows of fond allegiance, she would hear
 Their homage with such calm and scornful ear
 That even the proudest nobles of the isle
 Shrunk 'neath the winter of that haughty smile
 That spoke a weary heart for ever wed
 To its first, latest love, the worshipped dead:
 In lone and lofty sorrow that would turn
 To thy proud stainless memory, Miles O'Byrne.

They slumber far apart—on one proud grave
 In the dim chancel floor the sunlight falls
 And Norman banners from grey arches wave
 High overhead, and on the 'scutcheoned walls
 Chevrons and bend in haughty blazon shine
 On pennoncel, and helm, and cloven mail,
 Borne when the chivalry of Esmond's line
 Rode 'mong the marshall'd Barons of the Pale—
 There sleep'st thou, Florence! There was nought for thee
 On this side heaven to live for! Earth was dreary
 When he departed; forest, dell and sea
 Lost with his death their glory, and all weary
 Of a cold, joyless world thou calmly passed
 Forth from thy father's towers, the loveliest and the last!

But thou, young soldier! where thy lowly bed?
 Swells there no requiem o'er thy early tomb?
 Wave there no knightly standards o'er thy head
 As for thy chieftain sires? Far in the gloom
 Of the primeval forests dost thou sleep!
 Thy dirge, the winds thro' western woods that sweep
 Across the broad savannas, and strange flowers
 Droop o'er thy rest, brightening the cedar bowers
 With summer beauty: and tho' none might rear
 A stately trophy o'er the Outlaw's bier,

Yet deep amid the silent forest glade
Rises a cross 'neath yon tall pine-tree's shade ;
A broken sword, a flag of faded green
Hang mouldering near, and there may oft be seen
On stilly evening by the Sacred Rood
An aged hunter bent in lonely prayer,
Waking with grief the voiceless solitude,
And pouring forth an outlaw's wasting care
In tears for thee, in youth's fair spring-tide taken
From glory's dreamland ! Yet he would not waken
Thy hero-sleep, or win thee to return
To share his weary exile, Miles O'Byrne !

K. S.

NOTES.

1795. The Orange Society test was (Introduction Chapter): "I solemnly swear to support the King, and use my utmost exertion to exterminate all the Catholics of the kingdom of Ireland." In this year seven thousand of the Catholic population of Armagh were massacred." See Plowden's "Review of the State of Ireland," and Kavanagh's "History of the Insurrection of '98."

1800. Newcomen the banker's wife was raised to the peerage as Baroness Newcomen of Mosstown, county Longford—a Union bribe to her husband for voting for Castlereagh.

In 1625-7, Lord Esmond, Sir William Parsons, Sir Richard Graham, and Sir James Piers Fitzgerald, confederated to wrest by fraud, violence, and suborning false witnesses, and divide among themselves the extensive territorial inheritance of the O'Byrnes, which, after the death of the chieftain, Fiech M'Hugh O'Byrne, in 1597, had been restored by letters patent from Elizabeth and James I. to the family. See Carte's "Life of Lord Ormonde," published 1735-6.

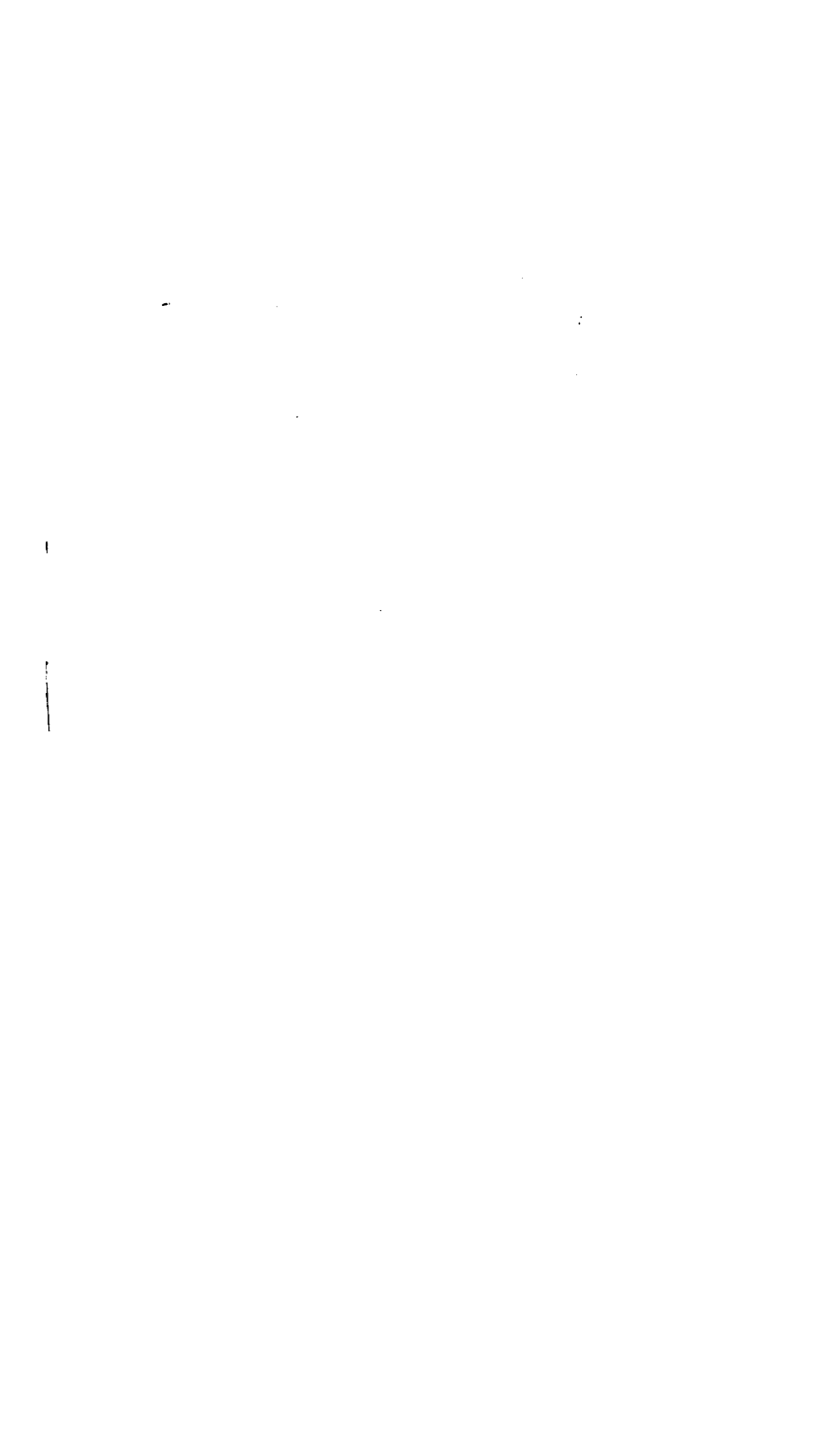
In 1667, the London Tavern, in Fishamble-street, was the office of Joe Damer, a noted usurer and Cromwellian soldier of fortune, who was enriched by great confiscation grants. He founded the Portarlington family.—*Gilbert's Hist. of Dublin*.

"Lord Castlereagh was well aware of the importance of securing the support of the leading Roman Catholic gentry at the Union."—*Dr. Brennan's Milesian Magazine*, p. 49.

"Daring outrages on the liberty of the subject were nightly practised with connivance of law. . . . Startling details of these outrages will be found in the Dublin newspapers, 1793-4."—*Irish Masonic Magazine*, 1794.

"Nearly all those who were concerned in carrying the Union destroyed their papers."—*Athenæum*.

"A ship conveying a chest of Lord Castlereagh's foundered at sea, and the papers were lost."—*Recorded by the Marquis of Londonderry*.



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